ENDORSEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

BY PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS

by

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(Under the Direction of Pamela O. Paisley)

ABSTRACT

Professional school counselors are particularly valuable to schools in helping to create an optimal educational environment given the wide range of functions they perform in service to all students in the school (The Education Trust, 2001). The identification of factors important in school counselor effectiveness can support the entire school system in efforts to assist students in their academic, personal, emotional and social development, as well as helping them to define their career interests and alternatives.

This study focused on school counselor effectiveness as asserted in professional standards (CACREP, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Sue et. al., 1998, The Education Trust, 2001) compared to beliefs of practicing school counselors. Information from the above standards was synthesized and organized into the following domains of school counselor effectiveness: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) counselor beliefs, and (d) contextual factors. The domains of the school counselor effectiveness model framed the development of the Professional School Counselor *Self-Efficacy* Survey (PSCSES, renamed the Professional School Counselor *Effectiveness* Survey, PSCES). The PSCSES was created in conjunction with the model of school counselor effectiveness for the purpose of assessing the congruence between professional standards and practicing counselors' beliefs regarding effective practices of professional school counselors.

The results of this study indicate that the beliefs of practicing professional school counselors are essentially congruent with information contained in professional standards (CACREP, 2001; Campbell and Dahir, 1997), counseling competencies (CACREP, 2001, Sue et. al, 1998; The Education Trust, 2001), and training models (CACREP, 2001), concerning the knowledge, skills, and contextual factors that are important to being an effective school counselor.

Implications for this study in current school counselor preparation and practice include information for graduate school counseling training programs, school counseling programs in schools, the knowledge, skills, and contextual factors seen as most important

by practicing professional school counselors for effectiveness, and personal beliefs of practicing professional school counselors about students.

Areas for future research include: (a) a study examining the behavioral correlates of effectiveness beliefs in school counseling practice and (b) an exploration of the role of personal beliefs in school counselor effectiveness and successful student outcomes.

INDEX WORDS: Professional School Counselor, School Counselor, School Counseling, School Counselor Effectiveness, Counseling Beliefs

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M.A., University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1999

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003

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August 2003

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family by blood and by love through time and space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This page is to honor and celebrate all of my family and friends who helped me to complete this dissertation. I know that any accomplishment that has ever been credited to me is rightly due to the community of believers and doers to which I am joined by purpose. I thank God for being my kind provider and making all things possible; my parents, Preston and Isabell Grimmett, for loving me, setting limits, and allowing me to do my thang; my sister, Dawn, for having my back no matter what; my United Family and Johnson-Chapman Family for giving me roots and legacy; my Aunt Ria and Uncle Hardy for being my God-parents; my ancestors and fellow freedom fighters for this opportunity; Butler Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church for my Christian foundation; my brothas in Tuskegee for being true and keeping me safe; the Tuskegee community and experience for my identity and worldview; the Smiths for being our family's best friends; my best friend Tee for staying down through the years and sharing unconditional love; Dr. Paisley for sincerely dedicating yourself to me…I love you in every sense of the word…this means I am graduating, so you know what that means☺…; Dr. Hayes for understanding "the system;" Dr. Bailey and Dr. Gratham for showing me professional academic brothas (and sistas, Dr. Phelps) who remain true; Dr. Campbell for being my political ally and personal champion; Jenny and George for expanding my circle of friends and opening my world; Jacquee for your kind spirit, generosity, and faithfulness; Hattie for being pleasant and reminding me why this is important for us; the entire faculty and administrative staff in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at

The University of Georgia for making sure I did what I needed to do to graduate; Natasha for being my family and always taking care of me; Julio, my Puerto Rican "brotha from another mother;" Kevin and Curtis for holding me down!; Lisa for being you; Jeff and John for giving me a different perspective; all the Black graduate students at UGA for the connection and affection; Curtis Byrd for putting the mixers on; Jay for dropping me dimes on the break and being there for me; angelablack for *making* me grow; Mr. James Smith for the free meals in Athens and the wisdom; Joy for being on call to make copies and deliveries for me; my Counseling and Human Development Center family at The University of South Carolina for giving me the time and support to write, especially Jody for her procrastination workshop that was key to me finishing this!; Michele P. Godwin for going through this with me; and to you my dear adah, te amo…ma a salaama-one.

To all of my sisters and brothers in love not specifically mentioned here, please know that your kindnesses live in my heart and energize and sustain me always. To each of you I am grateful and my hope is to tell you this in person and to share what I have received from you with our community, locally and globally. Until we are together again, I love you always. one. marcandersongrimmett

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In America, school is intended to be for all children and adolescents. Schools are envisioned as gardens of creativity where children and adolescents grow and exercise their imaginations and their identities as students. American society expects schools to be centers for learning, where students acquire knowledge and skills that will facilitate their academic, career, and personal/social development. However, Fine and Weis (2003) point out that schools are profoundly contradictory spaces. The same schools that advance education and academic achievement as necessary tools for healthy development, personal success, and functional membership in American society, also systematically reproduce class-, race-, ethnic-, gender-, and sexuality-based inequities (Fine & Weis, 2003). In particular, schools that serve poor children and children of color are more likely to be under-funded (Kozol, 1991), to have a higher percentage of unqualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2001), and to be housed in decaying physical structures (McNeil, 2000). Furthermore, the focus of the education reform movement on high-stakes testing, performance-based assessments, and progressive curricula, all threaten to enlarge the so-called achievement gap between White American students and their counterparts and to increase the number of students who drop out of school prior to high school graduation (Fine & Weis, 2003; The Education Trust, 2001). Additionally, current political and economic trends have made proactive, comprehensive, and funded educational policies and programs less of a national priority, in favor of tax cuts for the biggest corporations

and the wealthy (“Democrats’ Response,” 2003). Therefore, it is not surprising that many students do not receive the proper nutrients they need to grow into competent, productive, contributing members of society.

The responsibility of schools to meet the needs of all of their student constituents given the current social, economic, and political context of education in America is monumental, yet fundamental to its purpose. All school personnel – administrators, teachers, staff, counselors, and coaches – share the school’s responsibility to *all* students. However, few school personnel have direct access to all students and may, therefore, have limited perspectives on the needs of the student population as a whole.

The Role of Professional School Counselor

School counselors work with all students, school personnel, families, and members of the community as an integral part of the educational program. Professional school counselors address the needs of all students through the implementation of a comprehensive, standards-based, developmental school counseling program (American School Counselor Association, 1999). School counseling programs promote school success through a focus on educational, social, career, and personal development, academic achievement, prevention and intervention activities, and advocacy for all students (Nystul, 2003).

Professional school counselors assist students through four primary interventions: (a) *counseling*- a confidential interpersonal process of helping students, individually or in small groups, resolve or cope constructively with their problems and developmental concerns; (b) *large group guidance*- a planned, developmental program of guidance activities designed collaboratively with teachers to foster students' academic, career, and

personal/social development; (c) *consultation*- a collaborative partnership in which the counselor works with parents, teachers, administrators, school psychologists, social workers, medical professionals and community health personnel in order to plan and implement strategies to help students be successful in the education system; and (d) *coordination*- a leadership process in which the counselor helps organize, manage and evaluate the school counseling program. The counselor assists parents in obtaining needed services for their children through a referral and follow-up process and serves as liaison between the school and community agencies so that they may collaborate in efforts to help students (ASCA, 1999).

Role and Function by Grade Level

A developmental model of counseling is important for the specific goals and strategies of school counselors working with students at various academic levels (Nystul, 2003). *Elementary school counselors* generally work with students from kindergarten through the fifth grade. The developmental task identified by Erikson (1959) for students at the elementary level is to develop a sense of industry or a feeling of competence and mastery. Elementary school counselors work to foster independence and autonomy in students primarily through consultation and group guidance activities to facilitate their educational development (Nystul, 2003).

Middle school counselors serve students making the transition from childhood to adolescence typically in the sixth to eighth grades. Developmentally, adolescents and/or middle school students start to work towards identity formation. Tatum (1997) explains this process as learning to integrate “one’s past, present, and future into a cohesive, unified sense of self…a complex task that begins in adolescence and continues for a

lifetime" (p. 20). Middle school counselors help students gain a clear understanding of who they are as individuals to foster their personal and academic growth (Nystul, 2003).

High school counselors prepare students to make the transition from public school to post-secondary education and to the workforce. They also provide support for middle school students as they adjust to their role as high school students. Students at this level continue to form relationships with their peers that help them to further define who they are, what they believe, and what they would like to do with their lives (Santrock, 1999). High school counselors emphasize social interest and interpersonal effectiveness to facilitate the academic, career, and personal/social development of students.

In this regard, professional school counselors find themselves in a distinctive position to influence student outcomes positively. The role of the school counselor is to help all students realize their potentials by assessing the particular needs of students and designing an academic structure for their optimal educational development. The Education Trust (2001) describes school counseling in this way:

> School counseling is a profession that focuses on the relations and interactions between students and their school environment with the expressed purpose of reducing the effect of environmental and institutional barriers that impede student academic success. The profession fosters conditions that ensure educational equity, access, and academic success for all students K-12. To accomplish this function, the trained school counselor must be an assertive advocate creating opportunities for all students to nurture dreams of high aspirations. (Transforming School Counseling, ¶ 1)

Although professional school counselors have access to all students with the goal of helping them to be successful, school counselors must acquire specific knowledge and develop skills if they are to be effective. Professional standards for the preparation and practice of school counselors have been developed that identify the knowledge and skills base for counselors associated with effectiveness (CACREP, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Sue et al., 1998; The Education Trust, 2001). However, the extent to which practicing professional school counselors endorse the knowledge and skills that inform current professional standards of effectiveness in the field is unknown.

New Vision for School Counseling

The "New Vision for School Counseling" (Paisley & Hayes, 2002) recognizes that contextual factors within the school system also play vital roles in the effectiveness of school counselors. New-vision school counselors are student advocates and school leaders who remove systemic barriers and design programs to facilitate the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students (Paisley & Hayes, 2002). Additionally, "the new vision school counselor demonstrates a fundamental belief in the capacity of all students to achieve at high levels on rigorous and challenging academic course content when provided with the necessary encouragement and supports to ensure their success" (Paisley & Hayes, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, the personal beliefs of school counselors regarding the new vision are important in their overall effectiveness, or lack thereof, in helping students to reach their goals.

Within the context of the new vision for school counseling and through an examination and assessment of the professional standards for the preparation and practice of school counselors that included: (a) the 2001 standards of the Council for

Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001), (b) the Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards (Sue et al., 1998), (c) the National Initiative for Transforming School Counseling (The Education Trust, 2001), and (d) the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), the School Research Group at The University of Georgia (SRG) assembled a model for school counselor effectiveness (SCE). The model consists of the: (a) content knowledge of the professional school counselor, (b) skills of the professional school counselor, (c) beliefs of the professional school counselor, and (d) contextual factors, or factors in the school system, that impact the professional school counselor.

Statement of Problem

The school counseling literature does not indicate the extent to which practicing professional school counselors agree with the above standards regarding school counselor effectiveness. Additionally, limited research exists that establishes the positive relationship between preparation and practice models for professional school counselors and practicing school counselors perceptions of effectiveness in the field (The Education Trust, 2001). Research is needed to explore that relationship. Moreover, educational researchers have rarely targeted professional school counselors for information concerning their perceptions of the effectiveness of school counselors. Research studies have investigated the perceptions of principals (Olson & Allen, 1993), teachers (Quarto, 1999), and parents (Chapman, DeMasi, & O'Brien, 1991) regarding the effectiveness of professional school counselors. Yet, minimal research has been directed to the beliefs of professional school counselors regarding factors that influence their own effectiveness. In light of the general lack of research that has been done on school counselor effectiveness,

an innovative research approach to learn from the experiences of school counselors in the field has much to offer the profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to: (a) describe the factors school counselors believe are important to their effectiveness, (b) determine the level of congruence between what is asserted in professional standards and what is believed by practicing professional school counselors to contribute to school counselor effectiveness, (c) and assess professional school counselor beliefs about students.

The study focuses on practicing professional school counselors from across the United States. Study participants were chosen from the American School Counselor Association 2001-2002 Membership Directory and Resource Guide (ASCA, 2002). School counselors from each academic level (elementary, middle, high school) were the targets of the survey.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The key research questions (RQ) and null hypotheses (H_o) of this study are:

RQ 1: What factors do practicing professional school counselors believe are important to their effectiveness?

H_o1: There will be no differences between what elementary, middle, and high school counselors believe about the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) contextual factors (i.e., institutional practices) that contribute to school counselor effectiveness.

RQ 2: Are the beliefs of practicing professional school counselors regarding effectiveness congruent with professional standards?

H_o2: There will be no differences between what the standards (CACREP, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Sue et al., 1998; The Education Trust, 2001) assert and what counselors believe about the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) contextual factors (i.e. institutional practices) that contribute to school counselor effectiveness.

RQ 3: What are the personal beliefs of practicing professional school counselors about students?

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, the use of a survey makes it nearly impossible to verify that all participants have the same understanding of its purpose or that they answer it consistently. Participants have to rate the importance of certain factors to being an effective school counselor. The ratings of importance are relative to the individual participant completing the survey. Additionally, the survey has forced choices of agree or disagree regarding specific statements about students that limit the response sets.

Significance of Study

The professional literature is limited, save the current work of The Education Trust (2001), in research that gives voice to the point of view of practicing professional school counselors about what they believe is important for all school counselors to be effective in school systems. Moreover, administrative bodies, such as accreditation organizations (e.g., CACREP) and professional organizations (e.g., ASCA) are responsible for determining what constitutes appropriate training and competent, effective practice. This study asserts that the voices and input of the practicing professional school counselor need to be assessed to determine their level of agreement

with the above administrative bodies if the field is to create meaningful, relevant, and appropriate models to address the needs of school counselors in training, professional school counselors in the field, and students within the P-12 school system.

This investigation is important because: (a) it researches the critical link between school counseling theory and professional practice (i.e., models and mastery; competencies and counseling; standards and school systems), (b) it provides information from practicing professional school counselors, based in their professional experience, about the knowledge, skills, and contextual factors they believe contribute to any school counselor being effective; and (c) it provides information about professional school counselors' beliefs related to students, learning, and school systems. These three main aspects of this investigation are discussed more below.

First, the relationship between theory and practice is necessarily reciprocal if it is to serve as the principal system of checks and balances for which it was originally hypothesized (Baker, 2000). This investigation takes composite information from professional training and practice, models, competencies and standards (theory), and surveys professional school counselors concerning the applied effectiveness of using such information in the field (practice). Essentially, this research evaluates the perspective of practicing professional school counselors regarding present training and practice guidelines. In effect, the study is intended to address the question, is theory believed by practitioners to contribute to effective practice? Therefore, the results of this study have implications for both training and practice.

Secondly, school systems are challenged greatly to meet the needs of all students (Baker, 2000; The Education Trust, 2001). Therefore, it is vital that school staff have the

tools necessary to overcome those challenges successfully (Kiselica, Changizi, Cureton & Gridley, 1995). An awareness within the school counseling profession of what is believed to be effective potentially helps the educational process of all students. All students stand to benefit from high-level professional school counselor self-efficacy (Baker, 2000). A sense of efficacy evolves from knowing what will work in a given situation based on one's experience (Bandura, 1977). Successful experiences enable individuals to believe they have what is necessary to work through a variety of difficult circumstances, whether familiar or foreign (Bandura, 1977). Effective professional school counselors are invaluable to school systems given their dynamic nature and diverse student populations. This study draws from the professional experiences of school counselors to help clarify and verify factors important to facilitating school counselor effectiveness.

Finally, research on school counseling is ultimately directed to understanding if the beliefs of professional school counselors bear significantly on their decisions and actions regarding students. This study does not evaluate the outcome or impact that such beliefs may have on the academic, career, and personal/social development of students. That determination is beyond the purpose and scope of this research. Rather, this study was intended to establish the foundation of general beliefs held by professional school counselors as a point of reference for future inquiry. For example, do current school counselor beliefs account for any, or correspond with, African American male students having higher suspension rates than any cultural group in the country? (Gordon, Della Piana, & Keleher, 2000). This study may potentially bring to light valuable resources that can be used to empower educators in their work.

Chapter Summary

Social, economic, and political forces shape the educational climate in the United States (The Education Trust, 2001). Schools often have limited resources with which to provide the quality educational programs that students need to learn and to be successful (Fine & Weis, 2003). Therefore, it is imperative that the efforts of all school personnel be maximized in order that students receive the greatest benefit. Professional school counselors are particularly valuable to schools in this regard given the wide range of functions they perform in service to all students in the school (The Education Trust, 2001). The identification of factors important in school counselor effectiveness potentially benefits the entire school system.

The following chapters of this study are titled: Review of Related Research (Chapter Two), Methodology (Chapter Three), Results (Chapter Four), and Summary, Conclusions, and Implications (Chapter Five). The Review of Related Research chapter covers relevant literature concerning the congruence between practicing school counselor beliefs regarding effectiveness and professional standards assertions of effectiveness as a professional school counselor. The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (PSCSES) is also introduced in Chapter Two. Chapter Three describes the methods used in the research study and includes the: (a) description of the sample, (b) research design, (c) development and description of the PSCSES, (d) data collection, (e) statistical treatment, and (f) limitations. The Results chapter contains the findings of data related to the research hypotheses tested. Tables are included in Chapter Four to illustrate the results. Finally, Chapter Five presents the discussion of the findings of this study and includes implications and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The current educational reform movement is focused on academic achievement through educational accountability (Paisley & Hayes, 2002). Federal, state, and local mandates of high academic standards and standardized measures of academic success place a heavy responsibility on educators to facilitate student learning. The premium placed on accountability and assessment necessitates that effective methods of instruction be identified and activated to ensure that all students can meet high academic standards. Teachers, however, are not the only part of the school system that influence student outcomes. All school personnel and school partners, including administrators, staff, parents, and the greater community can play meaningful roles in the educational process and should also be considered in educational reform.

Until recently, however, a critical component of the school system had been left out of the educational reform movement—professional school counselors (House & Martin, 1998). The goal of the school counseling program articulated by the American School Counselor Association coincides with the guiding principles of the education reform movement, which is to enable all students to achieve success in school and to develop into contributing members of society (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Paisley and Hayes (2002) contend that “school counselors have a significant role to play in ensuring students’ success. Because they have a school wide perspective on serving the needs of

every student, school counselors are in an ideal position to serve as advocates for all students and as agents for removing systemic barriers to academic success" (p. 2)

Given the vital role professional school counselors can play in the academic success of all students, the School Research Group at The University of Georgia developed a model of School Counselor Effectiveness in response to the demands of the educational reform movement. The School Research Group (SRG) model of School Counselor Effectiveness (SCE) focuses on both the school counselor and the context of school counseling practice. Specifically, the SRG model of SCE is comprised of the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) counselor beliefs, as well as (d) contextual factors (i.e., school system factors) that facilitate effectiveness.

Effectiveness

The School Research Group uses the standard definition for effectiveness in this study. Effectiveness is having an intended or desired effect. To be effective means to achieve a desired result. Therefore, effectiveness is an outcome or the desired result achieved. SRG suggests effectiveness in professional school counseling is the result of appropriate school counselor preparation and competent school counseling practice. Therefore, professional models of school counselor preparation and practice were identified and selected for use in this study as the standards for effectiveness in professional school counseling. Conceptually, the models chosen represent a professional continuum of developmental processes that contribute to effectiveness, with school counseling preparation at one end and school counseling practice at the other.

In this investigation of the congruence between professional school counselor beliefs regarding school counselor effectiveness and professional standards, the points of

reference for effectiveness in professional school counseling are the following four sources or models: (a) the 2001 standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001), (b) the Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards (Sue et al., 1998), (c) the National Initiative for Transforming School Counseling (The Education Trust, 2001), and (d) the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). The sections that follow include: (a) the background information on the professional organizations that created the standards used in this study and (b) the rationale for the selection of these professional standards for use in this study.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) was formed in 1981 as a corporate affiliate of the American Counseling Association (ACA). CACREP's mission is to promote the advancement of quality educational program offerings. "Schools with programs accredited by CACREP have accepted their responsibility to provide quality educational programs" (American Counseling Association, 2001, About CACREP, ¶ 4).

The foundation of effectiveness in the school counseling specialty is the training received by professional school counselors (Sisson & Bullis, 1992). Therefore, it is important to investigate the criteria by which school counselors are being prepared to work in school systems. The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is the organization that determines the minimal criteria for the preparation of school counselors. The purpose of CACREP is to ensure that

"education programs prepare students to be effective in a dynamic world and profession" (CACREP, 2001, Introduction, ¶ 1).

A general mission of school counseling training programs is to educate and train students so that upon completion of the program students are able to function competently and effectively in the role of a professional school counselor (ACES, 1990; Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001). The "CACREP standards are written to ensure that students develop a professional identity as a counselor and also master the knowledge and skills to practice effectively" (CACREP, 2001, Introduction, ¶ 2). The practice of school counseling, therefore, rests on the preparation of school counseling students. This study uses the eight common core areas and the specialty standards for school counseling programs of the CACREP (2001) standards to assess the extent to which practicing school counselors believe this information is important to the effectiveness of all school counselors.

The Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development

The Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AACD), under the leadership of Thomas Parham (1991-1992), was charged to develop multicultural competencies. This initiative resulted in the creation of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies "to guide interpersonal counseling interactions with attention to culture, ethnicity, and race" (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992).

The increasing diversity in the student population of school systems has mandated that all school personnel increase their multicultural awareness and competence, if they are to be effective and ethical in the services they provide (Herring, 1998; Sciarra, 2001). Multicultural awareness and competence is certainly required for professional school

counselors given the relevance of culture in interpersonal counseling relationships (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). The centrality of culture and multiculturalism to the counseling profession warrants inclusion of the multicultural counseling competencies and standards in this study. Multicultural counseling refers to preparation and practices that integrate multicultural and culture-specific awareness, knowledge, and skills into counseling interactions (Sue et. al, 1992). The multicultural counseling competencies and standards are vital to school counselor preparation and practice in that, like all knowledge acquired, being competent is an active process that professionals engage in over the life span (Constantine, 2001; Paisley & Benshoff, 1996).

Professional school counselors need multicultural counseling skills for appropriate interventions, advocacy and effective use of culturally appropriate models (Sue et al., 1992). SRG recognizes that multiculturalism is an essential component in effective and ethical school counseling practice. Social and cultural diversity is one of the eight common core areas in the CACREP (2001) standards. However, the multicultural counseling competencies and standards are included as a separate reference point for effectiveness in the school counseling profession because of the value SRG believes it holds in effective and ethical school counseling practice. The position of SRG is reflected in the ethical standards of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2002), Section E. 2., “Multicultural Skills,” which state the following:

> The professional school counselor understands the diverse cultural backgrounds of the counselees with whom he/she works. This includes, but is not limited to, learning how the school counselor’s own cultural/ethnic/racial identity impacts her or his values and beliefs about the counseling process. (p. 26)

Additionally, ASCA's (2002) position statement on multicultural counseling states: "School counselors take action to ensure students of culturally diverse backgrounds have access to appropriate services and opportunities promoting the individuals maximum development" (p. 51); and "ASCA recognizes cultural diversities as important factors deserving increased awareness and understanding on the part of all school personnel, especially the school counselor" (p. 51). Multiculturalism and multicultural counseling skills as they relate to professional school counselor effectiveness are considered in this study.

The Education Trust

The Education Trust, established in 1990 by the American Association for Higher Education, is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to work for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, kindergarten through college (K-16). In addition, The Education Trust focuses on educational improvement for institutions serving low income students and students of color. The National Initiative for Transforming School Counseling, organized by The Education Trust, is a multi-stage, multi-year initiative designed to improve school counseling by focusing on the graduate-level preparation of school counselors (The Education Trust, 2001).

In 1996, The Education Trust, with support from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, worked with a panel of leaders to identify what school counselors need to know in order to help all students succeed academically. In the second phase of the initiative, The Education Trust worked with ten institutions of higher education and their K-12 district partners to plan new training models for school counselors. Now in the third phase of the initiative, The Education Trust is working with six institutions and their K-

12 school district partners who are designing and implementing their planned program changes (The Education Trust, 2001).

The Education Trust (2001) had numerous relevant findings related to the preparation and practice of school counselors that included: (a) graduate level preparation programs provide insufficient opportunities for field practice of skill and knowledge, (b) pre-service school counselors take generic counseling courses that make little or no connections to school, learning, children, adolescents and youth, and (c) graduate level preparation of school counselors has little emphasis on improving student achievement and creating access and support for all students to a rigorous academic preparation.

In response to their findings, The Education Trust (2001) developed a set of "Specific Counseling Skills Necessary to Transform the Role of the School Counselor for the 90's and Beyond," which they believe are necessary in order for school counselors to be effective. Skills related to educational leadership, teaming and collaboration, advocacy, and use of data were identified by The Education Trust (2001) as essential to help schools and school systems achieve educational equity and excellence for all students. The National Initiative for Transforming School Counseling, developed by The Education Trust (2001), states that school counselors need to cease functioning as clerical staff, administrators, and/or inadequately trained therapeutic mental health providers and begin to assist students in their academic, social, emotional and personal development; and to serve as a leader, as well as effective team member, working with teachers, administrators and other school personnel to make sure that each student succeeds.

This study of school counselor effectiveness draws from the recommendations of The Education Trust (2001). The focus of the national initiative fits appropriately with

the purpose of this study in that it focuses on the knowledge and skills of professional school counselors believed to contribute to effectiveness it the field, expressed by The Education Trust (2001):

> The training and actual practice of school counselors participating in this initiative focus on skills and knowledge counselors need to help all students achieve in a rigorous academic program of studies. . . understanding how to be an effective counselor in a school setting – maximizing the acquired skills and knowledge received in training – should be a part of the pre-service for school counselors.

The American School Counselor Association

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA), founded in 1952, is a worldwide nonprofit organization that focuses on providing professional development, enhancing school counseling programs, and researching effective school counseling practices. One of the ways ASCA supports counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career, and personal/social development is through the National Standards for School Counseling Programs.

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs provide "a public statement of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program" (Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p.3). The national standards also, implicitly set forth expectations of what professional school counselors should know and be able to do in the implementation and operation of a developmental and comprehensive school counseling program. Additionally, these standards serve as an organizational tool to identify and prioritize elements for an effective school guidance program (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

Defining effective school counseling is the focus of this study. Specifically, this study focuses on school counselor perceptions of relevant professional standards regarding effectiveness that inform the training and practice of professional school counselors. As stated earlier, the standards from which the SRG model of effectiveness was created are: (a) the 2001 standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001), (b) the Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards (Sue et. al., 1998), (c) the National Initiative for Transforming School Counseling (The Education Trust, 2001), and (d) the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). The four domains that make up the SRG model of school counselor effectiveness: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) counselor beliefs, and (d) contextual factors are expanded upon below in relation to the standards chosen for this study (see Figure 1).

Knowledge and Skills

Information related to knowledge and skills for school counselors are routinely combined in professional standards. For this reason, the knowledge and skills domains will be considered together here. However, the knowledge and skills domains will be considered separately in Chapter Three regarding data collection and analysis.

The knowledge and skills domains include core areas considered necessary for effective practice in counseling. These areas include: (a) professional identity, (b) social and cultural diversity, (c) human growth and development, (d) career development, (e) helping relationships, (f) group work, (g) assessment, and (h) research (CACREP, 2001).

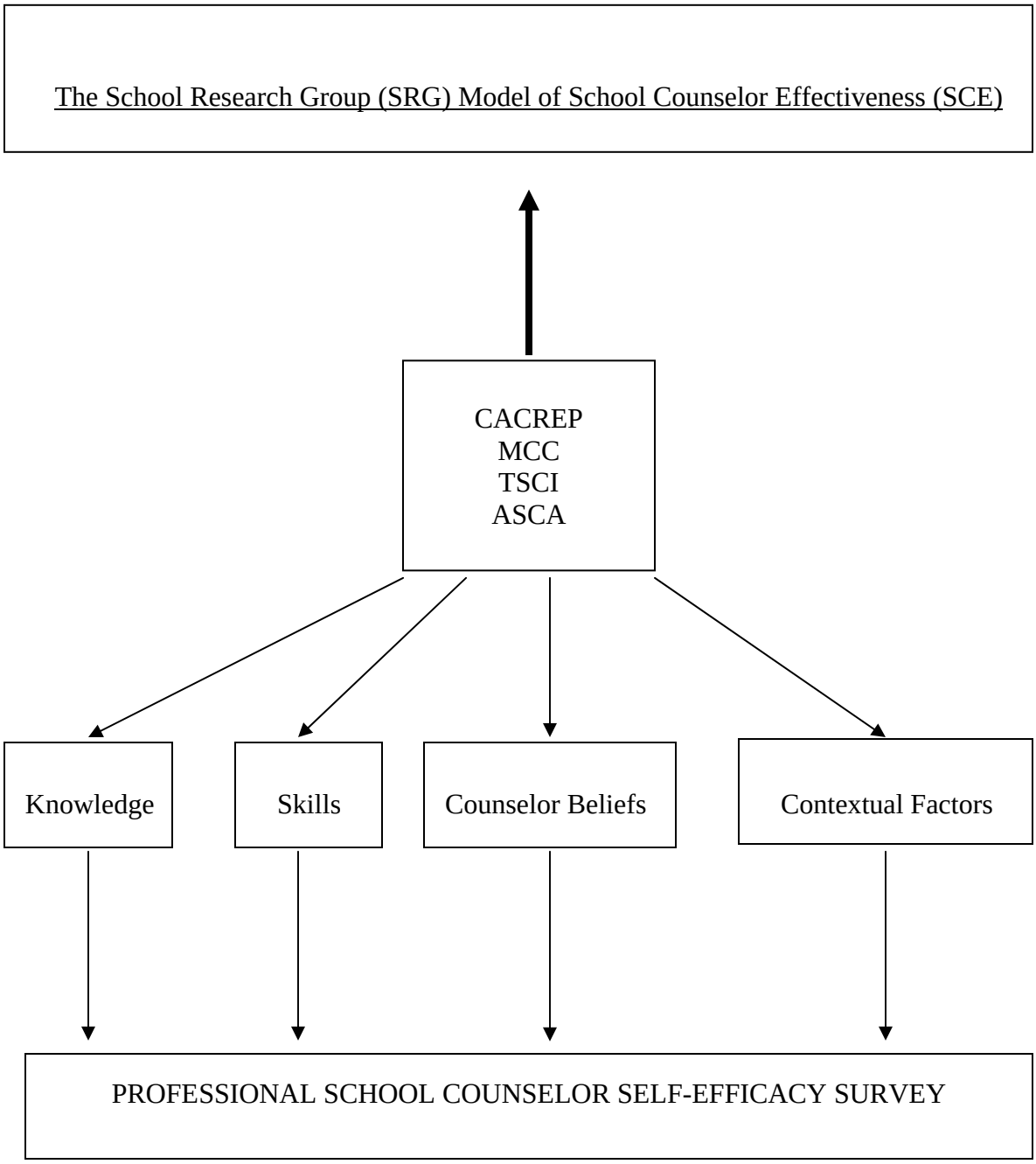

Figure 1. The SRG model of SCE informed by professional standards, divided into four domains, used to frame the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (PSCSES).

In addition to the common core areas, the field of school counseling has a specific knowledge and skills base. This specialized school counseling platform includes: (a) foundations of school counseling (e.g., history, philosophy, and current trends in school counseling and educational systems); (b) contextual dimensions of school counseling (e.g., coordination with teachers, parents, support personnel, and community resources to promote program objectives); and (c) specialized knowledge and skill requirements for school counselors (e.g., program development, implementation, and evaluation; counseling and guidance; and consultation). The profession of school counseling also focuses on three broad areas of K-12 student development: academic, personal/social, and career (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

The evolution of the American school system population in terms of diversity and cultural heterogeneity has made cultural competence fundamental to working with all students. Given this transformation, counselors' awareness of their own cultural values and biases, counselors' awareness of clients' worldviews, and culturally appropriate intervention skills (Sue et al, 1998) are addressed in the knowledge and skills domain of the SRG model. Additionally, knowledge and skills related to student advocacy, educational leadership, and technological competence are included (The Education Trust, 2001).

In summary, the knowledge and skills domains of the SRG model of SCE contain information pertaining to: (a) the school counseling educational curriculum, (b) the foundations of the school counseling profession, (c) multiculturalism, and (d) "21st century school counseling skills" (e.g. advocacy, leadership, and technology). The content of the knowledge and skills domains are represented on the Professional School

Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey and can be found in Appendix C along with its sources in Appendix D.

Counselor Beliefs

Personal beliefs of school counselors related to the students with whom they work, the schools at which they work, and the school systems in which they operate are assumed, by the SRG model, to play a role in their effectiveness as school counselors. Ridley, Mendoza, Kanitz, Angermeier, and Zenk (1994) expressed the following:

> Counselors bring to counseling their own personal experiences, beliefs, values, and expectations. These, in turn, affect the ability of counselors to accurately perceive, comprehend, and integrate into treatment the idiographic meanings clients attach to their own experiences. If counselors' unexamined personal agendas block perceptual schemata, they may ignore, distort, or underemphasize incoming cultural information to the detriment of the client. (p. 132)

Therefore, SRG created and included the counselor beliefs domain in the model of SCE to determine what school counselors believe about students, learning, and school systems. The counselor beliefs domain, just like the previous knowledge and skills domains, is informed by the professional standards selected for this study (CACREP, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Sue et al., 1998; The Education Trust, 2001). The SRG model places particular emphasis on counselor beliefs related to students and how the school system works with students. The content of the counselor beliefs domain is represented on the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey and can be found in the Appendix C along with its sources Appendix D.

Contextual Factors

Professional school counselors function in the larger context of the school system. The school system has many components that include administrators, teachers, counselors, staff, parents, students, and the greater community. Therefore, school counselor effectiveness necessarily has to consider contextual factors, in addition to knowledge, skills, and counselor beliefs. Contextual factors can be conceptualized as points of interaction where the professional school counselor role interfaces with other educator roles within the school system with the common goal of student success. Professional school counselors incorporate contextual factors into their practice and within their practice to facilitate the academic, personal/social, and career development of all students.

The CACREP (2001) standards and the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (The Education Trust, 2001) extensively inform the contextual factors of the SRG model of SCE. The content of the contextual factors domain is represented on the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey and can be found in the Appendix C along with its sources in Appendix D.

Introduction to The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey

The four domains of the SRG model of SCE framed the development of the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (PSCSES) (See Figure 1). Larson and Daniels (1998) define counselor's counseling self-efficacy as one's beliefs or judgments about her or his capability to effectively counsel a client. Conceptually, the SRG model relates effectiveness to efficacy in this way-- *if* a professional school

counselor: (a) believes that they know what is effective, (b) believes they can do what they know is effective, (c) has personal beliefs that are congruent with these ideas, and works in a system that supports (passively or actively) these ideas and beliefs *then*, through application, a professional school counselor will have or develop a higher level of self-efficacy as a professional school counselor.

Construction of the PSCSES mirrors the model of self-efficacy and has four sections that are titled identically or similarly to the domains of SCE described above. Section one of the PSCSES pertains to the importance of certain knowledge areas in being an effective school counselor and corresponds to the knowledge domain of the SRG model. Section two pertains to the importance of certain abilities and skills in being an effective school counselor and corresponds with the skills domain of the SRG model. Section three of the PSCSES contains a set of statements concerning students and school systems that correspond with the counselor beliefs domain of SCE. Finally, section four of the PSCSES pertains to the influence of systemic factors on SCE and corresponds with the contextual factors domain of the SRG model.

Chapter Summary

This study is about effectiveness as asserted in professional standards compared to beliefs of practicing school counselors related to knowledge, skills, beliefs, and context. The PSCSES was created in conjunction with the SRG model for the purpose of assessing the congruence between professional standards and practicing counselors' beliefs regarding effective practices of professional school counselors. The development of the PSCSES is covered in chapter three on procedures.

In review, the School Research Group model of School Counselor Effectiveness is informed by: (a) The 2001 CACREP standards (CACREP, 2001), (b) the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (Sue et al., 1998), (c) the Transforming School Counseling Initiative (The Education Trust, 2001), and (d) the National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997). Information from the above standards was synthesized and organized into the following domains of the SRG model of SCE: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) counselor beliefs, and (d) contextual factors. The domains of the SRG model framed the development of the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the participants in the study, identify the research design, articulate the development of the survey instrument, describe the survey instrument, explain the data collection methods, determine how data were analyzed, and elucidate the limitations of the study.

Participants

Four professional school counselors from each of the 50 United States were randomly selected from the American School Counselor Association 2001-2002 Membership Directory and Resource Guide to participate in this study. The total sample size is 81 participants. The participants are from all 50 states in America and Washington, DC, except Maine, Nevada, New Jersey, and Texas.

Design

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design. The design describes the level of congruence between the beliefs of practicing school counselors and professional standards pertaining to the knowledge, skills, counselor beliefs, and contextual factors associated with school counselor effectiveness. The descriptive survey research design is well suited for these purposes, particularly because original data was being collected for describing a population too large to observe directly, as is the case with the national sample selected for this research (Babbie, 2001). Additionally, “surveys are also excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population (Babbie, 2001, p.

238). The purview of this study of school counselor effectiveness makes appropriate use of the survey research model.

Development of The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey

The School Research Group (SRG) meets weekly for 3 hour sessions during the academic year and operates through a collaborative and democratic group process. SRG was composed of 4 counselor educators and 3 doctoral students at the time that the PSCSES was created. All SRG members were affiliated with the school counseling program in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at The University of Georgia. Four members of the SRG (at that time) were former professional school counselors with an average of 4 years experience. Each group member is responsible for setting the agenda and facilitating the portion of the group that pertains to their research interests. Other SRG members take on the role of consultants and assistants. It is the duty of the SRG members, who are not leading that aspect of the group to help clarify the research goals of the leader, help to formulate research questions, and generally to offer input that will contribute to the design of the complete research project.

Through meetings with SRG, the idea about asking practicing professional school counselors what they believed contributed to the effectiveness of all school counselors was generated. The thought originated, in part, from a similar study by the Center for Applied Research in Educational Improvement (CAREI) that asked pre-service school counselors (i.e., master's students in school counseling programs) to provide similar information.

SRG suggested that a survey be created to determine the level of congruence between professional standards and practicing counselors' beliefs regarding effective practices of professional school counselors. The survey, as stated in Chapter One, was originally conceived solely to consider systemic factors that have a bearing on the effectiveness of all school counselors (e.g., the level of parental involvement and support for the school counseling program; the number of counselors hired in a school counseling program). In the course of the group process of SRG, it was decided that the effectiveness paradigm being developed should be expanded. Therefore, two additional areas of inquiry, considered critical to the effectiveness of all school counselors in school systems by SRG, were added to the survey. These areas are: (a) content knowledge and (b) abilities and skills of professional school counselors. The additional areas, along with the counselor beliefs domain described below, resulted in the SRG model of School Counselor Effectiveness.

Ultimately, SRG sought to maximize the opportunities available using a descriptive survey research model. SRG is interested in researching the beliefs of school counselors and the implications of global beliefs operating in the profession for students and school systems. Specifically, SRG is concerned about what school counselors believe about the students that they work with and the school systems for which they work. For example, do professional school counselors maintain beliefs such as "College is not for every child" or "All children are not college material?" The point of interest for SRG, using this example, is the relationship between the personal beliefs of the school counselor and the determination of "who is" and "who is not" a college bound student. How professional school counselors' personal beliefs operate in their work with students

is outside of the parameters of this research project. Still, the purpose of this research did allow for specific beliefs of professional school counselors, consistent with professional standards, to be attained using the PSCSES.

The fourth and final section of the PSCSES was created with the goal of acquiring information about the general beliefs of professional school counselors regarding students, learning, and school systems. Professional school counselor self-efficacy, again, is essentially a belief or set of beliefs. Effectiveness as a school counselor is related to a professional school counselor's sense of efficacy in working with all students in dynamic school systems. The beliefs of professional school counselors are especially relevant to this study and supplement information attained from the practicing school counselors surveyed regarding the factors school counselors believe are important to their effectiveness.

Description of The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey

The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (PSCSES) was created collaboratively by the School Research Group (SRG). The design and format of the PSCSES was modeled after a school counselor trainee survey developed by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota (CAREI). The content of the PSCSES was extrapolated from: (a) the 2001 CACREP standards (CACREP, 2001), (b) the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (Sue et al., 1998), (c) the National Initiative for Transforming School Counseling (The Education Trust, 2001) and (d) the National Standards for School Counseling Programs of the American School Counselor Association (Campbell & Dahir, 1997); as well as the

professional experiences of the members of the SRG and the related professional school counseling literature (Baker, 2000; Blair, 1999; Sutton & Fall, 1995).

Knowledge and Skills

The PSCSES consists of an 8-item demographic questionnaire and a 92-item survey, divided into four sections by the construct being assessed. (See Appendix C). The first two sections of the survey (Sections I & II) assess separately, knowledge areas (Section I) and abilities and skills (Section II), believed by professional school counselors to be important factors in the effectiveness of all professional school counselors. Each of the four section headings is followed by instructions. For example, the instructions for Section I begin with, "Using the scale below, circle the number that indicates how important you believe the following knowledge areas are in being an effective school counselor." Statements in Sections I and II, such as "Individual counseling theories" and "Ability to use intervention strategies that are sensitive to the cultural and contextual factors of the student," are followed by a four-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from *not at all important* to *extremely important*.

Contextual Factors

The third section (Section III) assesses the influence of systemic factors on the effectiveness of all professional school counselors. Section III, similar to Sections I & II, consists of statements such as, "The principal's support for the school counseling program," followed by a four-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from *not at all influential* to *extremely influential*.

Counselor Beliefs

The final section of the PSCSES (Section IV) deviates from and is separate from the effectiveness focus found in the previous three sections (Section I-III). Section IV adds a unique dimension to the PSCSES by providing statements about students, learning, and school systems, such as "All children can learn," to which the professional school counselor responds with *agree* or *disagree*. This section of the scale was created and added to be a relative indicator of professional school counselor beliefs. The SRG wanted to acquire basic information from professional school counselors reflective of global belief systems operating within the profession. Information obtained through Section IV could potentially orient, guide, and inform areas of professional development that need to be targeted in the future.

Piloting the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey

A pilot study was conducted to refine the PSCSES (Grimmett, 2001) in which respondents were asked to provide written feedback on the survey's construction (e.g. Are the directions and the survey items clear? Does anything need to be clarified, added or removed in the survey?). The sample for the pilot study consisted of 42 professional school counselors, mostly from three counties in northeast Georgia, and included 32 (76.2%) women and 10 (23.8%) men. The participants identified themselves racially/ethnically as African-American 16.7% (7), White/ Caucasian (non-Hispanic) 81% (34), and Mexican 2.4% (1). The average age of the study participants was 46 years. The professional school counselors in the pilot study represented elementary (47.6%), middle (19 %), and high school (33.3%) levels with an average of 9 years experience.

Minor modifications were made to the PSCSES based on the feedback and suggestions of participants in the pilot study.

Revising the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey

The recommendations were considered by SRG during the revision process of the PSCSES and the following changes were made to the survey:

1. The overall aesthetic of the survey was changed to be more appealing and respondent friendly (i.e., clearer delineations between sections; directions stem and Likert key were placed at the top of each page).
2. The general directions to the PSCSES were made more concise and the directions for each section of the PSCSES were clarified. For example, directions in Section I of the PSCSES were changed from “Using the scale below, how important do you think the following knowledge areas are in being an effective school counselor” to “Using the scale below, circle the number that indicates how important you believe the following knowledge areas are in being an effective school counselor.” The use of the word “believe” in the directions versus “think” is more consistent with this study’s focus on beliefs about school counselor effectiveness.
3. Two scale items, technical knowledge and technical skills, were added to the PSCSES Section’s I and II, respectively. One scale item was removed from Section III of the PSCSES because it was confusing to respondents and redundant. The one scale item eliminated was related to services performed by the school counselor that were not directly related to the school counseling program.

4. A qualitative component was created in Section IV of the PSCSES by adding the following statement to the directions: “For the statements in SECTION FOUR, please use the margins and/or the next page to express in writing any difficulties you may have had in selecting your response.”

Data Collection

Research packets were assembled and mailed to four randomly selected professional school counselors from the American School Counselor Association 2001-2002 Membership Directory and Resource Guide in each of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Each school counselor listed in a particular state was given a number. Four numbers per state were then randomly selected for participation in this study. The packets contained: (a) a cover letter, which informed potential participants of the motivation for and the purpose of the study, the primary researchers conducting the study, and how their participation would benefit the school counseling profession; (b) two identical informed consent statements (participant and researcher copy), (c) a demographic questionnaire, (d) the PSCSES and (e) a stamped envelope addressed to the primary researcher. The participants were instructed in the cover letter to use the self-addressed stamped envelope to mail the completed informed consent form (researcher copy), demographic questionnaire and PSCSES back to the primary researcher conducting the study. The original mailing consisted of 208 research packets. Two follow-up mailings are recommended by the literature for survey research and were scheduled for three weeks following the original mailing and three weeks following the second mailing (Babbie, 2001). In the second mailing, research packets were only sent to

the 166 individuals who did not respond to the original mailing. For the final mailing, 150 research packets were sent out.

All completed research packets were sent directly to the primary researcher by U. S. mail. Once research materials were received, the data were entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data file (Foster, 2001) to be discussed more in the following section.

The Statistical Treatment

This study follows a descriptive survey research design (Babbie, 2001). Specific factors (e.g., knowledge, skills, contextual factors, and counselor beliefs) asserted in professional standards to be associated with school counselor effectiveness (SCE) are assessed for congruence with practicing school counselor beliefs about SCE using descriptive statistics. Additionally, participants were assigned to groups based on (a) school level and (b) geographic location and compared using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All demographic information is presented in the Results (Chapter 4).

Analysis of Variance

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a very general statistical approach for comparing population means. In this study there is only one independent variable, the professional school counselors in the population sample. The independent variable has several levels, or multiple groups, which can be separated and compared depending on the demographic category of interest. For example, the response ratings of elementary school counselors can be compared to those of high school counselors. This type of ANOVA with one independent variable is referred to as a one-way ANOVA.

The variability in ratings on the dependent variable, in this case the PSCSES, was analyzed and separated into several parts using an ANOVA. Part of the total variability was attributed to individual differences, which includes measurement errors and chance factors. The remaining portion of the total variability was attributed to group membership (Olejnik, 1999).

Differences between group means as compared to the differences within the groups are the focus of the ANOVA. This statistical method calculates the variance between group means (e.g., the variance of mean response ratings between elementary school counselors and high school counselors) and the average variance of individuals within the groups (e.g., the variance within elementary school counselors alone and the variance within high school counselors alone). If the variance between the group means is large compared to the variance within the groups, it is concluded that the populations from which the participants were selected have different means. However, if the variance between the group means is nearly the same as the variance within the groups, it is concluded that the population means are equal (Olejnik, 1999).

The null hypothesis, tested by the ANOVA, for this study of school counselor effectiveness is that the ratings of the items on the PSCSES will be nearly the same for all study participants regardless of group membership (i.e., elementary, middle, or high school level). The alternative hypothesis is that the population rating means are not identical. ANOVA determines if this hypothesis can be supported, that is, if the ratings given to survey items by respondents are the same despite group membership. Statistically significant differences in the ways study participants respond based on group membership are established by ANOVA, if such differences exist.

The other hypothesis of this study, not tested by the ANOVA, is that there are no differences between what the standards assert and what counselors believe about the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) counselor beliefs, and (d) contextual factors that contribute to school counselor effectiveness. This hypothesis was tested using descriptive statistics that indicate the degree to which practicing school counselors endorsed the information that is asserted in professional standards concerning school counselor effectiveness.

Limitations

Research Design

The limitations of survey research described by Babbie (2001) are summarized below:

1. Standardized questionnaire items often represent the least common denominator in assessing people's attitudes, orientations, circumstances and experiences. By designing questions that will be at least minimally appropriate to all respondents, you may miss what is most appropriate to many respondents. In this sense, surveys often appear superficial in their coverage of complex topics. For example, school counselor effectiveness is the result of dynamic interpersonal processes that are difficult to capture, describe, and compartmentalize using a survey format. Therefore, the survey is one tool to gather information about school counselor effectiveness with distinct structural parameters.
2. Survey research can seldom deal with the context of social life. The survey researcher rarely develops the feel for the total life situation in which respondents are thinking and acting that, perhaps, the participant observer can. There is no

way to determine if the professional school counselor who completes the survey understands the statement the way the researcher intended.

3. Surveys are inflexible. They typically require that an initial study design remain unchanged throughout. However, the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey used in this study was first tested in a pilot study and modifications were made as noted above in the section titled *Revising the Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey*.
4. Surveys are subject to artificiality in that they cannot measure social action; they can only collect self reports of recalled past action or of prospective hypothetical action. (p. 268). Practicing professional school counselors were asked to use their professional experiences to guide how they respond to the survey. Surveys cannot verify what the respondents have done or will do with respect to school counselor effectiveness.

Statistical Procedures

The ANOVA statistical method operates from the following set of assumptions articulated by Olejnik (1999):

1. The units of analysis are independent of each other. That is, the practicing professional school counselors within and between demographic groups do not influence each other. Violation of this assumption means the probability of making a Type I error may be larger than the stated significance level. A Type I error occurs when the researcher rejects the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is true. An example of a Type I error is finding a significant difference

in the responses reported by elementary and high school counselors when no actual significant difference exists between the two groups.

2. The population distribution from which the samples were selected are normal. Violation of this assumption is less serious unless populations from which the samples were selected are extremely skewed. It does, however, affect the probability of a Type II error and power. A Type II error occurs when a researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is false. An example of a Type II error is not finding a significant difference in the responses reported by elementary and high school counselors when an actual significant difference exists between the two groups. Statistical power is a measure of the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is false.
3. The variability of units in a population (i.e., the variability of school counselors in the national population sample) are equal across populations. Violation of this assumption is not serious if sample sizes are equal and differences in population variances are not extreme. If the sample sizes are unequal and variances are unequal, then the probability of a Type I error can be either larger or smaller than the stated significance level depending on the relationship between sample size and group variance.

Sampling

Random selection of participants does not ensure that the sample is representative of the total practicing school counselor population. The random selection of professional school counselors does reduce researcher bias in the selection process. When participants are chosen randomly, there is no way to make sure each demographic variable observed

in the study is balanced and proportional to the total population under observation. The composition of the study population must be described and the degree to which that population sample is reflective of the larger population being studied must be discussed. Additionally, the sample population for this study is limited to those who returned the survey. Consequently, the sample population is representative of individuals who chose to complete surveys that are mailed to them, which may not be reflective of the larger population.

This study includes a national sample of practicing professional school counselors, however the sample is not representative of the heavy east coast population in the United States or differences in school counseling practices from state to state.

Reliability and Validity

Babbie (2001) provides the following explanation on the validity and reliability of survey research:

> Survey research is generally weak on validity and strong on reliability. As an illustration, people's opinions on issues seldom take the form of strongly agreeing, agreeing, disagreeing, and strongly disagreeing with a specific statement. Their responses to any survey must be regarded as approximate indicators of what the researchers had in mind when they framed the questions. To say something is a valid or invalid measure assumes the existence of a "real" definition of what's being measured, and many scholars now reject that assumption (p. 269).

Chapter Summary

The central objective of this research is to acquire information from practicing professional school counselors about their perspectives concerning the important factors in being effective as a school counselor using professional standards as the context. SRG believes that the first hand experiences of practicing professional school counselors are important to examine for what they can contribute to the understanding of school counselor effectiveness. Therefore, this population is chosen to ascertain its views on the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) counselor beliefs, and (d) contextual factors that they believe are important for all school counselors to be effective.

A survey research design is appropriate for the stated objective because: (a) it permits a national sample of professional school counselors to be researched, which allows for more variance, (b) the survey items match up well with the descriptive analysis capabilities of SPSS, and (c) demographic groups identified from the PSCSES are readily entered into SPSS for comparative analysis using an ANOVA. These supporting statements are all within the primary goals of this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter details the results of the Professional School Counselor *Self-Efficacy* Survey (PSCSES). For the purposes of this discussion, the name of the PSCSES was changed to the Professional School Counselor *Effectiveness* Survey (PSCES) to more accurately reflect the construct being evaluated. The description of the sample population is presented. Data is presented corresponding to each section of the PSCES originally described in Chapters 2 and 3. Findings related to the research questions for this study and the null hypotheses tested are presented in the following sections.

Description of Sample

The sample included 72 (88.9%) women and 9 (11.1%) men. The participants identified themselves racially/ethnically as African-American 3.7% (3), Asian-American 2.5% (2), Hispanic 2.5% (2), Native-American 1.2 % (1) and White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic) 88.9% (72). The average age of the study participants was 47 years. The professional school counselors in the study represented elementary (42%), middle (18.5%), and high school (22.2%) levels with an average of 11 years experience. Twenty respondents have held leadership positions in school counselor associations in the last 5 years (Table 1A). There were 28 White, female, elementary school counselors who composed the largest group of respondents in the sample (35%) (Table 1B).

Table 1A

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	n	Percent*
Gender		
Females	72	88.9%
Males	9	11.1%
Ethnicity		
African-American	3	3.7%
Asian-American	2	2.5%
Hispanic	2	2.5%
Native-American	1	1.2%
White/Caucasian	72	88.9%
Other	0	0.0%
School Level		
Elementary	34	42.0%
Middle	15	18.5%
High	18	22.2%
Other	14	17.4%
Geographic Region		
Southern	22	27.2%
North Atlantic	18	22.2%
Midwestern	15	18.5%
Western	26	32.1%

*Percentages will not always add up to 100% as there is some data missing.

Table 1B

Race and Gender Composition of Sample by School Level

	Race				
Gender	African-A.	Asian-A.	Hispanic	Native-A.	White
			Elementary		
Female	2 (2.5)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	0	28 (35)
Male	0	0	0	0	1 (1.2)
			Middle		
Female	0	0	1 (1.2)	0	11 (14)
Male	0	0	0	0	3 (3.7)
			High		
Female*	1 (1.2)	0	0	1 (1.2)	9 (11)
Male	0	1 (1.2)	0	0	5 (6.2)
			Other		
Female	0	0	0	0	15 (19)
Male	0	0	0	0	0

Note. *One female high school counselor identified herself as Hispanic, Native-American, and White.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The key research questions (RQ) and null hypotheses (H_o) of this study are:

RQ 1: What factors do practicing professional school counselors believe are important to their effectiveness?

H_o1: There will be no differences between what elementary, middle, and high school counselors believe about the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) contextual factors (i.e., institutional practices) that contribute to school counselor effectiveness.

RQ 2: Are the beliefs of practicing professional school counselors regarding effectiveness congruent with professional standards?

H_o2: There will be no differences between what the standards (CACREP, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Sue et al., 1998; The Education Trust, 2001;) assert and what counselors believe about the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) contextual factors (i.e. institutional practices) that contribute to school counselor effectiveness.

RQ 3: What are the personal beliefs of practicing professional school counselors about students?

Knowledge, Skills, and Contextual Factors

The knowledge and skills areas believed to be important in being an effective school counselor are presented in Table 2 and Table 3. Contextual Factors believed to influence school counselor effectiveness are presented in Table 4.

Knowledge

Specific knowledge related to planning and developing the curriculum, as well as the administration and evaluation of the school counseling program, were believed to be important in being an effective school counselor. Specific content areas found to be

important included learning, developmental, individual counseling, and group counseling theories. Related to knowledge of developmental theory, particular knowledge about the academic, career, and personal/social development of students were believed to be important in effectiveness. Specialty areas believed by respondents to be important for school counselor effectiveness included knowledge pertaining to classroom management, assessment strategies, substance abuse, crisis intervention, safety enhancement/violence prevention, post-secondary planning, special education evaluation and placement, student support services, and legal and ethical responsibilities.

Several of the knowledge areas that have been endorsed by The Education Trust were believed by respondents to be important in their effectiveness including professional identity for school counselors, educational leadership, student advocacy, and consultation. School counselors believed knowledge of multiculturalism was important in being an effective school counselor. Specifically, knowledge pertaining to the worldviews, beliefs, cultural values, and sociopolitical experiences of students; and understanding how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect one personally and professionally were rated as important for school counselor effectiveness (see Table 2).

Skills

Many of the skills areas believed to be important for school counselor effectiveness correspond to the knowledge areas identified above. These are the functions respondents believe are important to be able to do (with a specialized knowledge base). Using leadership skills and assessment data, helping to design and implement student programs, working with students at risk, advocating for students,

Table 2

Knowledge Areas Believed to be Important for School Counselor Effectiveness

Item	Subject	n	M	SD
K1.	Program planning and evaluation	81	3.42	.687
K2.	School counseling curriculum development	81	3.37	.679
K3.	Administration of school counseling program	81	3.38	.681
K4.	Classroom management	81	3.32	.629
K5.	Academic development	81	3.43	.523
K6.	Career development	80	3.29	.679
K7.	Personal and social development	81	3.80	.401
K8.	Assessment strategies	81	3.28	.553
K9.	Learning theories	81	3.09	.728
K10.	Developmental theories	81	3.32	.704
K12.	Substance abuse	81	3.22	.612
K13.	Individual counseling theories	81	3.23	.638
K14.	Group counseling theories	81	3.20	.679
K15.	Crisis Intervention	81	3.69	.465
K16.	Consultation	81	3.42	.545
K17.	Safety enhancement/Violence prevention	81	3.46	.571
K18.	Post-secondary planning	80	3.06	.832
K19.	Student advocacy	81	3.48	.573
K20.	Professional identity for school counselors	81	3.53	.545
K21.	Educational leadership	81	3.21	.647
K22.	Legal and ethical responsibilities	81	3.74	.468
K23.	Student's worldviews, beliefs, cultural values*	81	3.36	.639
K24.	Knowledge about how oppression affects*	81	3.37	.679
K25.	Student support services	81	3.43	.590
K26.	Special education evaluation and placement	81	3.20	.660

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that the statement has been summarized to fit into the table. A copy of the complete survey is included in Appendix C.

managing classrooms, and maintain an orderly environment – are compatible with knowledge of educational leadership, assessment strategies, student advocacy, classroom management, and administration of the school counseling program. These sets of skills were believed to be important for school counselor effectiveness. In addition, skills related to the use of assessment data including monitoring student personal/social and academic performance were found to be important for effectiveness.

Counseling skills found to be important for effectiveness included personal and social, educational and academic, and crisis intervention counseling as well as facilitating groups. Particular to educational and academic counseling, helping students with course selection was rated as an important skill. Collaboration skills with other professionals, parents, and community members were found to be important.

Multicultural counseling skills were believed by respondents to be important in being effective with students. These skills included: (a) racial and self-awareness; (b) awareness of how one's own cultural background and experiences have influenced attitudes, values, and biases about the counseling process; (c) ability of the professional school counselor to recognize the limits of their own multicultural competence; (d) being able to establish relationships with individuals in all cultural groups; (e) being able to conceptualize students' concern from their perspective or worldview; (f) ability to provide culturally sensitive programs; and (g) ability to use intervention strategies that are sensitive to cultural and contextual factors of the student (see Table 3).

Contextual Factors

The contextual factors believed by respondents to influence school counselor effectiveness (Table 4) are broad in scope. Therefore, the contextual factors are organized

Table 3

Skills Believed to be Important for School Counselor Effectiveness

Item Subject	n	M	SD
A1. Using leadership skills	81	3.45	.571
A2. Collaborating with parents and community*	81	3.68	.496
A3. Collaborating with other professionals	81	3.52	.527
A4. Advocating for students	81	3.78	.418
A5. Facilitating groups	81	3.44	.570
A6. Ability to use culturally sensitive interventions*	81	3.62	.489
A7. Managing classrooms	81	3.20	.660
A9. Working with students at risk	81	3.72	.454
A10. Using assessment data	81	3.26	.543
A11. Personal and social counseling	81	3.74	.441
A12. Educational and academic counseling	81	3.58	.545
A14. Crisis intervention counseling	81	3.75	.434
A15. Helping students with course selections	79	3.01	.776
A16. Helping to design and implement student programs	81	3.32	.566
A17. Monitoring student academic performance	81	3.10	.604
A18. Monitoring student personal/social performance	81	3.42	.610
A19. Maintaining an orderly environment	81	3.00	.671
A21. Ability to conceptualize student's concerns*	81	3.46	.633
A22. Ability to provide culturally sensitive programs	81	3.40	.606
A23. Ability to establish relationships*	81	3.62	.489
A24. Ability to recognize limits of multicultural*	81	3.57	.523
A25. Awareness of how one's own experiences*	81	3.54	.549
A26. Racial and cultural self-awareness	81	3.45	.673

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that the statement has been summarized to fit into the table. A copy of the complete survey is included in Appendix C.

Table 4

Contextual Factors Believed to Influence School Counselor Effectiveness

Item	Subject	n	M	SD
S1.	Understanding goals of counseling program*	81	3.67	.500
S2.	Principal support for school counseling program*	81	3.79	.433
S3.	Effective social networks with colleagues*	81	3.32	.686
S4.	Balancing expectations with student needs*	81	3.56	.570
S6.	Participation in decision-making*	81	3.47	.654
S8.	Time and place where sessions occur	79	3.01	.884
S9.	Physical space for individual and group counseling*	81	3.46	.708
S10.	Appropriate and adequate materials*	81	3.35	.692
S11.	Number of counselors*	81	3.62	.644
S12.	Sufficient clerical staff*	78	3.05	.896
S14.	Home environment of the student	80	3.33	.839
S15.	Parental involvement*	79	3.25	.623
S16.	Maintaining student confidentiality	81	3.84	.402
S17.	Students' perceptions about the school*	81	3.59	.565
S18.	Training experiences to improve cultural competence*	81	3.26	.667
S20.	The ratio of counselors to students	81	3.58	.668

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that the statement has been summarized to fit into the table. A copy of the complete survey is included in Appendix C.

into three categories: relationships, logistics, and students. In terms of relationships within the school system, several contextual factors were found to influence the effectiveness of school counselors including: (a) a clear understanding between counselors, administrators, teachers, and staff as to the goals of the school counseling program; (b) the principal's support for the school counseling program; (c) socially supportive relationships and effective social networks with colleagues in school; (d) balancing the pressures and expectations of teachers and administrators with the needs of students; (e) participation in the decision-making that affects the school in general, and the school counseling program in particular; and (f) maintaining student confidentiality.

School counselor effectiveness was also believed to be influenced by the following logistical factors: (a) time and place where sessions occur; (b) sufficient physical space to provide individual and small group counseling; (c) appropriate and adequate materials and equipment to deliver intended services; (d) the number of counselors hired in a school counseling program; (e) sufficient clerical staff to help counselors perform their duties; and (f) the ratio of counselors to students.

Finally, it was found that respondents believed that student related contextual factors influenced counselor effectiveness. These contextual factors included the: (a) home environment of the student, (b) level of parental involvement and support for the school counseling program, and (c) students' perceptions about the school and the school counseling program.

All items in Sections I (knowledge areas), II (abilities and skills), and III (systemic influences) of the PSCES received a mean rating of 3 or better except those items presented in Table 5. A rating of 3 indicates that an item is thought to be an

Table 5

Items Rated Below Important for or Influential to School Counselor Effectiveness

Item Subject	n	M	SD
K11. Test taking skills	81	2.95	.590
K27. Education foundations	80	2.96	.787
K28. Technical knowledge	80	2.99	.703
A8. Managing school bureaucracy	81	2.77	.671
A13. Consulting on curriculum	81	2.78	.671
A20. Non-counseling duties	80	1.91	.766
A27. Knowledge of language other than English	81	2.26	.833
A28. Technical skills	81	2.88	.748
S5. Actions of school board	80	2.83	.708
S7. Control of a budget	81	2.63	.749
S13. Physical environment of the school	81	2.80	.732
S19. Time spent on unrelated counseling activities.	80	2.46	1.02

important factor in being an effective professional school counselor (Sections I and II) or an influential factor on the effectiveness of professional school counselors (Section III). Ratings of 3 and higher denote agreement between what the professional standards assert and what professional school counselors believe about school counselor effectiveness. Therefore, H_o2 was rejected only for the items presented in Table 5. The items on the PSCES and their mean ratings are located in the Appendix C.

Specific information, indicated by rejection of H_o2, believed to be less important in being an effective school counselor included knowledge in the areas of: (a) test taking skills (K11), (b) educational foundations (understanding schools as a system and institution in society) (K27), and (c) technical knowledge (K28); skills in relation to: (d) managing school bureaucracy (A8), (e) consulting on curriculum (A13), (f) non-counseling duties (A20), (g) knowledge of language other than English (A27), and (h) technical skills (A28); and contextual factors pertaining to: (i) action of the school board (S5), (j) control of a budget (S7), (k) physical environment of the school (S13), and (l) time spent on unrelated counseling activities (S19) (Table 5) .

The omnibus hypothesis test for all items in Sections-I, II, and III of the PSCES indicated sufficient evidence to reject H_o1 and H_o2, that there was no difference in the ratings by study participants, when factored by: (a) school level and (b) location (geographic region). The rejection of H_o1 warranted further evaluation, using the Bonferroni multiple comparison tests method, which determined the specific items on the PSCES where mean differences were observed. The mean differences found in the PSCES results when factored by school level are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Significant Differences in Items Ratings Factored by School Level

Item	Mean-Difference	F
K4	**E**-H	3.57*
K7	**E**-H	3.40*
K18	E-**H**	3.68*
A7	E-H	4.04*
A15	E-**M**; E-**H**	4.79**
S12	E-**H**	3.53*

Note. E= elementary level school level respondents; M= middle school level respondents; H= high school level respondents. Items that have two mean-differences are separated by a colon. *p < .05. **p < .01. Letters in **bold** indicate the level with the highest mean rating of the pair.

School Level

The majority of the significant mean differences observed between the respondents, when factored by school level, were between respondents who were elementary and high school counselors. Respondents at the elementary school level rated the following items higher than respondents at the high level concerning knowledge in the areas of: (a) classroom management (K4), (b) personal and social development (K7), and skills in relation to: (c) managing classrooms (Table 6).

Respondents at the high school level rated the following items higher respondents at the elementary school level concerning knowledge in the area of: (a) post-secondary planning (K18), skills in relation to: (b) helping students with academic course selections (A15), and contextual factors pertaining to: (c) sufficient clerical staff to help counselors perform their duties.

There was one significant mean difference between respondents at the elementary school level and respondents at the middle school level for survey item 15 in Section II of the PSCES, concerning helping students with academic course selections. Middle and high school level respondents rated skills in helping students with academic course selections (A15) higher than elementary school level respondents (Table 6).

Counselor Beliefs

Fairness

The two statements with which respondents agreed with the most were “all students should be treated fairly regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status (100%)” and “schools should be responsible for providing a safe and nurturing environment for every student (99%).” Ninety-eight percent of respondents believed

"cultural differences are real and cannot be ignored." However only 21% of them believed that "the educational system responds to the academic needs of all children adequately and appropriately" and nearly 83% of respondents believed that "social or institutional barriers can keep students from achieving their potential."

Perceptions of Students

The majority (94%) of respondents believed that "school counselors are critical to the educational experiences and outcomes of students." Although almost 94% of professional school counselors believed that "all children can learn," nearly 31% also believed students use disabilities, and almost 19% believed students use minority status, as "reason not to be successful academically."

Home Environment

The results indicated that the majority of respondents placed responsibility on students for their own learning and held parents accountable for their child's success. Almost 88% of respondents believed that "students should be ultimately accountable for their own learning" and 53% believed that "without parental support, schools cannot be held accountable for student success." Related to parental support, nearly 68% of school counselors believed "the most influential factor in student achievement is home environment." Over half of the respondents (59%) believed "school personal expectations of students should be influenced by the student's personal circumstances."

College

On the subject of academics, almost 77% of respondents believed "all students should be held to high academic standards" and nearly 82% believed that "all students should have access to college prep classes." However, only 21% believed that "all

students should consider college as an option." The items in Section IV of the PSCES and a percentage-wise breakdown of the responses are presented in Table 7.

Chapter Summary

The data attained through the Professional School Counselor Effectiveness Survey was analyzed using an ANOVA. Descriptive statistics revealed items that were believed to be important in being an effective school counselor. Comparisons between groups of school counselors from different school levels and geographic regions demonstrated significant differences. Counselor beliefs were identified and can be found in Table 7. A discussion of the results follows in Chapter 5.

Table 7

Professional School Counselor Beliefs

Statement	*Agree (%)	Disagree(%)
1. School personnel expectations of students should be influenced by the student's personal circumstances.	59.3	38.3
2. All children can learn.	93.8	6.2
3. Social or institutional barriers can keep students from achieving their potential (e.g. racial/ ethnic/economic background).	82.7	17.3
4. The educational system responds to the academic needs of all children adequately and appropriately.	21.0	75.3
5. All students should consider college as an option.	21.0	79.0
6. Students use disabilities as reason not to be successful academically.	30.9	69.1
7. The most influential factor in student achievement is home environment.	67.9	29.6
8. Cultural differences are real and cannot be ignored.	97.5	2.5
9. All students should be held to high academic standards.	76.5	23.5
10. School counselors are critical to the educational experiences and outcomes of students.	93.8	4.9
11. Schools should be responsible for providing a safe and nurturing environment for every student.	98.8	1.2
12. Students should ultimately be accountable for their learning.	87.7	8.6
13. All students should have access to college prep classes.	81.5	18.5
14. Without parental support, schools cannot be held accountable for student success.	53.1	45.7
15. All students should be treated fairly regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status.	100	
16. Students use minority status as reason not to be successful academically.	18.5	81.5

*Percentages will not always add up to 100% as there is some data missing.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter includes an overall summary of the study, a summary of significant research findings, and a discussion of the meanings of those findings. Implications for professional school counselors regarding school counselor effectiveness are considered. Finally, recommendations for further research are presented.

Summary of the Study

School counseling professional standards provide specific information that is *understood* to facilitate school counselor effectiveness. The school counseling literature, however, does not reveal whether practicing school counselors *actually believe* that the information in professional standards does in fact facilitate them being effective as school counselors. This study sought to determine the level of congruence between what the professional standards assert and what practicing school counselors believe about school counselor effectiveness. In other words, “To what extent do practicing school counselors endorse beliefs that are asserted in the professional standards with regard to their assessment of being effective as a school counselor?”

The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (PSCSES) was developed by the School Research Group (SRG) to assess the level of congruence between what professional standards assert and what practicing school counselors believe with regard to school counselor effectiveness. A national sample of practicing professional school counselors was randomly chosen from the American School

Counselor Association 2001-2002 Membership Directory and Resource Guide to participate in this study. The PSCSES was mailed out to the selected professional school counselors in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Completed surveys were returned directly to the primary researcher by U.S. mail using the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope included in the packet originally mailed to the participant. Information collected from the returned surveys were entered into an SPSS data file for analysis.

The central hypothesis of this study of school counselor effectiveness is that there is no difference between what the standards assert and what counselors believe about the: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) contextual factors that contribute to school counselor effectiveness. Secondary hypotheses for this study are that no difference exists between: (a) the level of the school counselor (i.e., elementary, middle, or high school) or (b) the geographic region where the school counselor practices (i.e., Southern, North Atlantic, Midwestern, Western) in relation to what they believe about school counselor effectiveness.

Summary of Significant Findings

Knowledge, Skills, and Contextual Factors

The results of this study indicate that the beliefs of practicing professional school counselors are essentially congruent with information contained in professional standards (CACREP, 2001; Campbell & Dahir, 1997), counseling competencies (CACREP, 2001, Sue et. al, 1998; The Education Trust, 2001), and training models (CACREP, 2001), concerning the knowledge, skills, and contextual factors that are important to being an effective school counselor. This study validates professional standards of training and

practice on school counseling effectiveness based on the perceptions of the practicing school counselors surveyed.

The points of non-congruence between the beliefs of the professional school counselors surveyed and the information regarding school counselor effectiveness asserted in the professional standards are listed in Table 5. Significant differences were found between school counselor levels (i.e., elementary, middle, high school) regarding the importance of specific factors in school counselor effectiveness and are illustrated in Table 6. Likewise, the results also suggested geographic specificity with school counselors from different geographic regions in the U. S. having specific differences in what they believed was important in being an effective school counselor (Table 7).

Counselor Beliefs

Table 7 contains brief statements about students and shows the percentage of professional school counselors in this study that either agreed or disagreed with the statement. How the professional school counselors surveyed responded to the statements is understood to be reflective of their personal beliefs about students. Counselor beliefs, as stated in Chapter 2, are considered to be a significant dimension of the counseling process, therefore relevant to school counselor effectiveness.

The significant findings of this research study are discussed in the next section as follows. First, the discussion is focused primarily on the specific: (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) contextual factors found *not* to be important for or influential to school counselor effectiveness. Apparent contradictions between factors that would seem to compliment each other are explored. For example, if knowledge of assessment strategies was found to be important for school counselor effectiveness and using assessment data

was found not to be important, a possible explanation for that apparent discrepancy would follow. Next, the significant differences observed in the responses of the respondents when factored by school level is considered. Finally, a discussion about counselor beliefs as they relate to school counselor effectiveness concludes the section.

Discussion of Findings

Knowledge

The following three knowledge areas received mean ratings extremely close to the importance criteria. Test taking skills, educational foundations, and technical knowledge each received meaning ratings of at least 2.95, when a mean rating of 3.00 would be considered important. It is imperative to note that the mean ratings for the knowledge areas alone were only .05 points from meeting the criteria for important in being an effective school counselor in this study.

Test Taking Skills

It would be hard to imagine that professional school counselors do not believe test taking skills are important given all of the energy and resources directed toward standardized tests with recent educational reform efforts as stated earlier in Chapter 2. However, it is clearly conceivable why professional school counselors may not highly prioritize knowledge in the area of test taking skills as being important to their effectiveness. It is more likely that professional school counselors are well aware of the necessity of test taking skills, given they are often the professionals charged with the responsibility of administering such tests. However, professional school counselors may also believe, knowing that specialized graduate training is not required to administer a standardized test, that spending any significant amount of time working with all students

in a programmatic fashion on test taking is not their responsibility or the best use of their expertise. Therefore, it is understandable taking the above perspective why this specific knowledge area was found to be less than important to school counselor effectiveness.

Nevertheless, professional school counselors have specialized training and expertise pertaining to test taking skills that extend beyond the administration of standardized tests. School counselors are knowledgeable in stress and time management strategies, anxiety reduction techniques, and relaxation exercises, all of which can be considered test taking skills. Students that receive instruction in these areas potentially develop valuable skills that can facilitate their educational advancement and aid in their development as lifelong learners.

Educational Foundations

Schools are systems wherein the dissemination of power and responsibilities can affect how effective school professionals can be at their work, yet knowledge and understanding of that system was not considered to be an important factor in effectiveness. This finding speaks to the historical compartmentalization of school counseling programs within the larger school system (Baker, 2000). The traditional functional separation of the school counseling program from the fundamental operation of the school as a system serves to alienate school counselors from the administrative, collaborative, and leadership activities of the school (Paisley & Borders, 1995). This administrative-professional separation tends to minimize the professional school counselors awareness of their role in decision-making concerning the mission and operation of the school. Therefore, it is understandable why the majority of school counselors in this study did not rate educational foundations as important to their

effectiveness. The professional school counselor's understanding of their role through training and practice guidelines as well as their professional experiences may have de-emphasized their role in the leadership of the school.

Ironically, knowledge related to educational leadership and using leadership skills were rated as important to being an effective school counselor. Leadership can be operationalized in several ways. It is possible that the professional school counselors survey in this study did not connect educational leadership and using leadership skills to knowledge of educational foundations. However, knowledge of educational foundations would seem to empower and be valuable to leaders in school systems.

Technical Knowledge (and Skills)

Technical knowledge received a mean rating of 2.99 in terms of what these practicing professional school counselors believe is important to their effectiveness. It should be taken into consideration that many of the school counselors surveyed rated technical knowledge as an important area, though the mean rating is just below the average necessary for the "important" level. Technology is fundamentally a part of school systems; therefore, basic technical knowledge of the professional school counselor is necessary to function in that system. The degree to which technical knowledge is central to the daily functions of the school counselor is negotiable and variable depending on the needs of the school counseling program and the students it serves (Owen & Weikel, 1999). However, the understanding that some technical knowledge is necessary for a professional school counselor to be effective in an increasingly technological U. S. society must be acknowledged and validated (Baker & Gerler, 2001). School systems rely heavily on technology requiring all school personnel to be technologically competent,

even if the findings of this study places it just outside of the research design's criteria for importance to school counselor effectiveness.

Technical skills also received a mean rating below the "important" level. The skills domain of school counselor effectiveness will be considered in the next section. However, because technical knowledge and skills are essentially variations on the same concept, the above discussion is applicable to both.

Skills

Skill areas that were rated below the "important" level were: (a) managing the school bureaucracy, (b), consulting on the curriculum, (c) non-counseling duties, (d) knowledge of language other than English, and (e) technical skills. In the next sections, possible explanations for the findings for the above skill areas are considered. Additionally, relationships between the knowledge and skills areas found not to be believed important to school counselor effectiveness are explored.

Managing, Consulting, and Other Duties

Managing the school bureaucracy, consulting on the curriculum, and non-counseling duties are considered together in this section because of the connection they have with the educational foundations knowledge area discussed above. Each of the three skill areas can be viewed as a "school systems role" for the professional school counselor as opposed to a "school counseling program role." The functional separation between the school as a system and the school counseling program has been described above in the educational foundations section. The lack of relative importance of the above skill areas according to the findings of this study seems to correspond with the relative unimportance of educational foundations knowledge. Professional school counselors

appear to understand their role as being circumscribed to a particular domain of the school system. This relative circumscription places boundaries on the functioning of the school counselor that likely gives them access to teachers and students, but diminished access to the leadership of the school, thereby inhibiting or silencing their voices and energy in the decision making process. It seems a learned or assimilated way of operating that may be reinforced through prior training and present work experience.

Non-counseling duties are school related functions, that do not require specialized graduate level training, performed by professional school counselors such as monitoring the lunchroom, waiting with children after school, and working concessions at athletic events. Such functions are often viewed as necessary to aid in the overall functioning of the school, but not important to being an effective school counselor. In addition, the time spent on such activities was not found to influence school counselor effectiveness significantly.

Knowledge of Language other than English

The most recent U. S. census reported that people who identified themselves racially as Hispanic increased to 13%, making individuals of Spanish ancestry the largest minority group in the U. S. (“Hispanics Declared Largest Minority,” 2003). Knowledge of a language other than English did not receive a mean rating of important, despite an increasingly multiethnic and multilingual student population and the mean rating of important received by related items concerning multiculturalism (i.e.,“Being able to establish relationships with individuals in all cultural groups;” “Being able to provide cultural sensitive programs”).

Certainly language differences represent barriers to school counselor effectiveness, yet the findings of this study indicate knowing another language is not believed to be important to being effective as a school counselor. The school counselors surveyed may adjust to working with students with language differences through an interpreter, therefore not a skill that is fundamental to their role. However, without the necessary accommodations for language differences, professional school counselors are severely limited in terms of effectiveness when working with non-English speaking students.

Contextual Factors

The findings indicated that the following contextual factors received a mean rating below the criteria for "influential" on the effectiveness of professional school counselors: (a) actions of the school board, (b) control of a budget, (c) physical environment of the school, and (d) time spent on unrelated counseling activities.

School Board and Budget

The actions of the school board and the budget directly and indirectly affect the entire school system, including the school counseling program. The finding that practicing professional school counselors rate these factors as less than "influential," similar to the findings concerning educational foundations, illustrates an imaginary though functional separation between the school counseling program and the larger school system. Additionally, school board actions and budgetary control are functions customarily associated with the leadership of the school, which is typically not considered primary to the role of the professional school counselor.

It should be noted that, although the above contextual factors received a mean rating below the criteria for influential, it does not mean they were not considered influential at all by the school counselors surveyed. Rather, the actions of the school board and control of a budget were found only to somewhat influence the effectiveness of school counselors somewhat.

Physical Environment of the School

Practicing professional school counselors found the physical environment of the school influence on their effectiveness modestly. It is believed by some educators that the environment of a school must be perceived as welcoming to the students it serves if they are to feel included and to engage the learning process (Hillard, 1991). This concept applies equally to the school counseling program's office. The findings indicated that physical environment was not considered an influential factor in school counselor effectiveness. However, it received a mean rating above being "not influential at all." Therefore, it can be concluded that the aesthetics and environment of the school are believed by school counselors to play a role in their effectiveness.

Elementary, Middle, and High School Counselors

The differences observed between the ratings by elementary, middle, and high school counselors correspond with the developmental needs and complimenting academic structure for the students at each academic level. Knowledge and skills related to classroom management were found to be of greater importance for effectiveness by respondents that were elementary school counselors than respondents that were high school counselors. Students at the elementary level can be expected to have more

behavioral problems as a whole than those at the high school level making managing classrooms a significant factor in effectiveness (Santrock, 1999).

At the elementary school level the emphasis on personal and social development takes relative precedent over the emphasis on academic development seen at the high school level (Sandhu, 2001). The curricula of elementary schools focus on values and character education associated with being a good citizen, as well as academic development (ASCA, n.d.). Personal and social development curricula are aimed at helping students develop individually in terms of recognizing their own uniqueness and strengths to help them reach their academic potential as well as to develop into socially competent students able to form and participate in healthy relationships. Still, elementary school counselors must be fully committed to the academic preparation of students. It is in elementary school and middle school that students form the building blocks they will need to master the advanced coursework of high school (ASCA, n.d.).

Elementary schools typically have uniform curricula for each grade level (Sandhu, 2001). Therefore, the selection of academic courses is predetermined and not usually a function of elementary school counselors. At the high school level, academic course specificity is necessary and important for students to meet requirements for post-secondary alternatives (ASCA, n.d.). For example, high school students that plan to go to a four-year university need to follow a college preparatory curriculum. However, high school students that are primarily interested in developing particular vocational skills may find a more technical curriculum the best option.

Post-secondary planning is a major function of high school counselors more than counselors at any other school level. Students at this developmental stage are faced with

unique personal and career decisions about their future as compared to students at the elementary and middle school levels (ASCA, n.d.). Consequently, high school counselors, more than elementary or middle school counselors, found skills related to post-secondary planning to be important in being an effective school counselor. However, planning for post-secondary options has to begin in the early grades as well to ensure that students' potential is matched by developmentally appropriate educational tasks that will facilitate academic progression and educational success.

High schools typically serve a large student body. A larger student population means greater demands on all school personnel including professional school counselors. High school counselors indicated that having sufficient clerical staff to help counselors to perform their duties was an influential factor on school counselor effectiveness. The documentation associated with primary functions of a high school counselor, such as scheduling or post-secondary planning, underscores the need to have clerical help to aid in the school counselor's effectiveness in working with students.

Counselor Beliefs

The discussion of counselor beliefs follows the thematic format introduced in Chapter 4. The titles given to each subject were created for the purpose of discussion and are: (a) fairness, (b) perception of students, (c) home environment, and (d) college.

Fairness

All of the practicing professional school counselors surveyed agreed with the statement "all students should be treated fairly regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status." The full endorsement of this statement appears to demonstrate that school counselors fundamentally believe in the fair treatment of all students. This

particular belief of school counselors, however, did not necessarily correspond with how school counselors believed students were being treated. The majority of school counselors in this study did not believe that the educational system responded to the academic needs of all children. Further, the majority also believed institutional barriers can keep students from achieving their potential. This finding illustrates a clear contrast between how school counselors believe students should be treated and how students are or could be treated. The fair treatment of all students necessitates an educational system equally responsive to the needs of all its students as well as the removal of institutional barriers to student achievement and success.

It should be pointed out that although the majority of school counselors agreed with the statement "social or institutional barriers can keep students from achieving their potential," it cannot be assumed that they believed institutional barriers are indeed present. Nor can it be assumed that if institutional barriers are present that professional school counselors believe such barriers are preventing students from achieving their potential. Further, if barriers are present and acknowledged, whether professional school counselors feel a responsibility for social justice and take an active role in eliminating such barriers still has to be determined.

Perceptions of Students

Nearly all of the professional school counselors surveyed believed that "all children can learn." This finding is interesting in light of another finding that nearly 1/3 of the school counselors surveyed also believed students use disabilities as a reason not to be successful academically. In addition, almost 1/5 of the school counselors believed the same about how students use their "minority status." Any meaning drawn from these

conclusions would be tentative. However the school counselors who maintained these beliefs may believe that all children can learn, yet students with disabilities, or who are members of some other minority group, use these characteristics as reasons not to achieve or learn.

The 6% of professional school counselors that disagreed with the statement “all children can learn” needs to be mentioned. Though this percentage represents a small fraction of the counselors surveyed, this belief raises concerns about fair treatment of all students, an item endorsed by all study participants. If a professional school counselor does not believe a child can learn, it is reasonable to doubt whether that counselor will treat that child (student) fairly.

Home Environment

The division in responsibility between students, their families, and their school concerning the student’s academic development is fairly indistinct according to the findings of the counselors’ beliefs. It is clear from the findings that these school counselors believed that students are largely responsible or accountable for their own learning. Additionally, respondents believed that parental support and (healthy) home environment are essential to a student’s academic achievement and success. Parental support was believed so important to a student’s academic success that over half of the counselors surveyed believed that schools cannot be held accountable for student success without it. Furthermore, nearly 2/3 of respondents believed the most influential factor in student achievement is home environment.

This finding is particularly relevant for students who, for example, are in the custody of the state, have parents with jobs that do not allow them to spend much time

with their child, and/or for some other reason have parents that are not as active in their academic development. It seems that treating all students fairly also includes students with under involved parents, which shifts the responsibility back to the school systems and school counselors. However, the acknowledgement of the school's responsibility in keeping with treating all students fairly does not vindicate the parents of their responsibility to their child's education. Rather, it highlights the importance of schools teaming with parents to maximize their child's potential.

College

Over 3/4 of the school counselors surveyed believed that all students should be held to high academic standards and have access to college prep courses. But only 1/5 believed all students should consider college as an option. This finding clearly warrants further examination. It would seem that believing students should have access to college prep courses would also mean those same students should consider college as an option. The results of this study indicate this conclusion is not necessarily shared by all respondents (whether it is shared by the majority of counselors is another study). A mitigating factor that potentially helps to explain this apparent discrepancy is the finding that over half of the school counselors responding believed that school personnel's expectations of students should be influenced by the student's personal circumstances.

To adjust the expectations of students based on their personal circumstances raises several concerns. For example, college may be viewed by professional school counselors as an educational privilege only attainable to select students. However, the decision-making regarding those select students is problematic. Problems arise when a student's perceived personal circumstances take precedence over expectations for that

student. Such an adjustment of student expectations potentially limits that student's academic future and undermines their educational potential. Therefore, the influence of a student's personal circumstances on how a school counselor chooses to work with that student needs to be evaluated. School counselors' consistent reflective awareness of their personal beliefs about students is potentially advantageous to the personal/social, academic, and career development of all students.

Implications for Professional School Counselors

The implications for practicing professional school counselors regarding their effectiveness are twofold. First, this study in part appears to validate the relationship between school counseling theory and professional practice. Secondly, this study initiates an examination of the role of counselor beliefs in school counselor effectiveness.

Theory and Practice

Theory and practice are routinely postulated to go hand in hand. However, many theories are without validation through research on professional practice. In this study, school counselors essentially affirmed that the information asserted in professional standards regarding school counselor effectiveness is believed by professional school counselors to be accurate. Such an affirmation lends creditability to the school counselor training programs that follow the Council for Accreditation and Related Educational Program (CACREP) standards, as well as school counseling programs that follow the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards. Furthermore, specialized professional standards such as those provided by The Education Trust (2001) and the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (Sue et al., 1992) were also found to be

congruent with the beliefs of practicing professional school counselor regarding school counselor effectiveness.

The findings of this study provide school counselor educators and professional school counselors valuable information about the professional standards guiding the training and practice of school counselors. School counseling students are often interested in the "on the job" value of their education. Essentially, these students would like to know in advance if what they are learning will help them to be effective once they are practicing school counselors. This research answers that question affirmatively from the perspective of practicing school counselors. Likewise, practicing professional school counselors receive the confirmation of their peers that following the professional standards of practice in school counseling may facilitate school counselor effectiveness.

To research the relationship between school counseling theory and professional practice is a fundamental responsibility of our profession. It is our ethical obligation to make certain professional doctrine is accurate, relevant, and practical.

Counselor Beliefs

The personal beliefs of school counselors identified in this study demonstrate that counselor beliefs are likely to play an important role in school counselor effectiveness. It is conceivable that professional school counselors may possess knowledge and have skills that are believed to be important in being effective school counselors, yet maintain personal beliefs about students that diminish their effectiveness. It is also possible that in addition to knowledge and skills, a professional school counselor may work in an optimal school system, one conducive to school counselor effectiveness, while operating from a general belief system that impedes a student's development from being optimal.

The results of this study indicate the need for professional school counselors to be self-reflective counselors. School counselors need to be aware that their personal beliefs can serve to regulate their degree of effectiveness when working with all students. Therefore, the more aware professional school counselors are of their beliefs, the less likely they are to discourage or harm students.

However, it must be made clear that awareness of one's beliefs about students does not by itself ensure that professional school counselors will treat all students fairly and provide the type of assistance that an individual student's unique capabilities and goals require. There are indeed personal beliefs that school counselors can hold that are incongruent with school counselor effectiveness altogether. For example, the professional school counselors in this study who believed all students should not consider college as an option have already placed limits on certain students potential, which necessarily limits how effective they can be in working with those students. Essentially, college as a post-secondary option has been taken off their list of possibilities, thereby predetermining or limiting their career development.

For the reasons stated above, counselor beliefs are vital to school counselor effectiveness. Because counselors' activities are organized around their beliefs, it is reasonable to predict these beliefs fundamentally operate in the practice of school counseling. Therefore, it is necessary that counselor beliefs be congruent with professional standards of school counselor effectiveness in order not to sabotage the knowledge, skills, and contextual factors believed by practicing school counselors to facilitate their effectiveness.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study support the conclusion that professional school counselors generally believe that professional standards regarding school counselor effectiveness are accurate. However, this study does not prove that the application of professional standards leads to school counselor effectiveness. The logical next step in research on school counselor effectiveness is to determine if the professional standards, believed by professional school counselors to facilitate school counselor effectiveness, actually lead to effective practice. Additionally, the behavioral correlates of school counselor effectiveness that correspond with beliefs of school counselors regarding effectiveness need to be determined and evaluated for their validity.

In addition, counselor beliefs identified in this study suggest they play a role in school counselor effectiveness. The precise role that the personal beliefs of school counselors play in their effectiveness with students is undetermined. A qualitative approach seems well suited for further examination of counselor beliefs because the personal views of school counselors can be obtained directly, clarified, and evaluated regarding school counselor effectiveness. The findings pertaining to counselor beliefs ascertained in this study are limited and need supplemental information to uncover meanings and to draw valid conclusions. What this study provides in terms of a greater understanding of counselor beliefs is foundational in nature and more research is needed to discover how personal belief systems of school counselors operate in their work with students. Counselor beliefs are not separate from the practice of school counseling, which makes the rigorous study of them an ethical imperative in research on school counselor effectiveness. Finally, it is hoped that the information regarding professional school

counselors beliefs would help all counselors to reflect on their personal experiences and to think critically about their philosophies, ideologies, and worldviews, and how they comes to affect the children they serve.

Chapter Summary

Practicing professional school counselors were surveyed to understand their beliefs about the importance of specific knowledge, skills, and contextual factors for being effective school counselors. Personal beliefs of school counselors about students were also attained through the survey. Survey results were examined for descriptive statistics and analyzed with respect to school level and geographic region of the professional school counselor.

Implications for this study in current professional school counselor preparation and practice include information for graduate school counseling training programs, school counseling programs in schools, the knowledge, skills, and contextual factors seen as most important by practicing professional school counselors for effectiveness, and personal beliefs of practicing professional school counselors about students. These implications are evident in current school counseling preparation and practice today.

Finally, areas for future research include an examination of student outcomes related to beliefs about effectiveness, a study examining the behavioral correlates of effectiveness beliefs in school counseling practice, and a more detailed exploration of the role of personal beliefs in school counselor effectiveness and successful student outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY

COVER LETTER

October 2002

Dear Professional School Counselor,

My name is Marc Anderson Grimmett and I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at The University of Georgia (UGA). I am writing you to ask for your participation in my dissertation research on Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy.

For almost three years now, I have worked closely with my advisor, Dr. Pamela O. Paisley, the coordinator of the School Counseling Program at UGA. My responsibilities include teaching and supervising Masters students in the program, working with professional school counselors in the community, and participating in the School Research Group (SRG). SRG focuses on the preparation and practice of professional school counselors, in addition to other school related issues.

It is with this professional background, as well as my personal experiences as a student, that I have learned to appreciate and value the role of professional school counselors and to recognize the importance of your work in the success of all students. For these reasons, I have a strong interest in the perspective of professional school counselors regarding what you believe is related to the effectiveness of all school counselors.

The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (PSCSES), developed by SRG, is divided into four sections and seeks to identify the knowledge base (1), abilities and skills (2), and systemic factors (3) that you believe are related to the effectiveness of all professional school counselors. Additionally, section (4) of the PSCSES assesses global professional school counselor beliefs.

The purpose of this study is to acquire information that will contribute to increasing the effectiveness of professional school counselors, enhance and broaden professional school counseling practice, and to transform school counseling programs to function adequately within the school system. In addition, study participants may be inclined to reflect upon and make improvements in their own practice based upon the process of completing the survey.

You will find two informed consent forms, a demographic information form, the PSCSES, and a postage paid self-addressed envelope contained within this research packet. Please read the informed consent form carefully and keep the participant copy for your personal record. Please follow the instructions provided on the demographic form and throughout the PSCSES. The completed and signed informed consent form (researcher's copy), demographic information form, and PSCSES should all be mailed back to the researcher in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your help with my dissertation research which will hopefully ultimately help all children be successful in school.

Marc A. Grimmett, M.A.
School Research Group

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

Demographic Information

1. How do you identify yourself racially/ethnically? Please check all that apply:
   _____(1) African-American
   _____(2) Asian-American
   _____(3) Hispanic
   _____(4) Native-American
   _____(5) White, Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
   _____(6) Other (explain)_____

2. What is your gender?
   _____(1) Female
   _____(2) Male

3. What is your age?_____

4. Presently, at which school level are you a practicing professional school counselor:
   _____(1) Elementary School
   _____(2) Middle School
   _____(3) High School
   _____(4) Other

5. Approximately how many students attend the school where you are currently working?_____

6. How many years experience do you have as a professional school counselor?_____

7. In what city and state is the school where you are currently working?_____

8. Have you served in a leadership position for a school counseling association in the last 5 years?
   _____Yes
   _____No
   If yes, please identify your position:_____

APPENDIX C

THE PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELOR

SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY (PSCSES)

The Professional School Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (PSCSES)

The purpose of this survey is to assess what is believed to be important for **ANY** professional school counselor to be effective. As the practicing professional school counselor completing this scale, you are to use your individual professional experiences and/or particular school situation only as a guide to inform how you answer. There are four sections in the PSCSES. Please note directions under each section.

S E C T I O N O N E

Using the scale below, circle the number that indicates how important you believe the following knowledge areas are in being an effective school counselor.

(Please note that you are to respond to what you believe is important for any school counselor to **KNOW** to be effective and **NOT** to what you believe is important for any school counselor to be able to **DO** to be effective. For the purposes of this survey, knowledge and abilities/skills will be assessed separately; Knowledge is assessed in this Section-One, and Abilities/Skills are assessed in the following, Section-Two.)

	1 = Not at all important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Important 4 = Extremely important			**M**
1. Program planning and evaluation	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.42)**
2. School Counseling Curriculum development	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.37)**
3. Administration of School Counseling Program	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.38)**
4. Classroom management	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.32)**
5. Academic development	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.43)**
6. Career development	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.29)**
7. Personal and social development	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.80)**
8. Assessment strategies used to gather information about students (e.g. observation, standardized testing)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.28)**
9. Learning theories	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.09)**
10. Developmental theories	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.32)**
11. Standardized test taking skills	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.95)**
12. Substance abuse	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.22)**
13. Individual counseling theories	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.23)**

14. Group counseling theories	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.20)**
15. Crisis Intervention	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.69)**
16. Consultation	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.42)**
17. Safety enhancement/Violence prevention	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.46)**
18. Post-secondary planning	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.06)**
19. Student advocacy	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.48)**
20. Professional identity for school counselors (School counseling as a specialty of the profession; knowledge of school counselors role)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.53)**
21. Educational leadership (e.g. Involvement in policy-making decisions; participation in school-wide decision making)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.21)**
22. Legal and ethical responsibilities	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.74)**
23. Students' worldviews, beliefs, cultural values, and sociopolitical experiences	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.36)**
24. Knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect one personally and professionally	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.37)**
25. Student support services	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.43)**
26. Special education evaluation and placement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.20)**
27. Educational foundations (e.g. Understanding schools as a system; understanding school as an institution in society)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.96)**
28. Technical knowledge (e.g. knowledge of computer programs-Word, PowerPoint, etc. and internet-websites, search engines, email, etc.)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.99)**

S E C T I O N T W O

Continuing to use the scale circle the number that indicates how important you believe the following abilities and skills are in being an effective school counselor.

(Please note that you are to respond to what you believe is important for any school counselor to be able to **DO** to be effective and **NOT** to what you believe is important for any school counselor to **KNOW** to be effective. For the purposes of this survey, knowledge and abilities/skills will be assessed separately; Knowledge is assessed in the previous-Section One, and Abilities/Skills are assessed in this-Section Two.)

	1 = Not at all important 2 = Somewhat important 3 = Important 4 = Extremely important			**M**
1. Using leadership skills in working with teams in school settings	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.45)**
2. Collaborating with parents and community members	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.68)**
3. Collaborating with other professionals	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.52)**
4. Advocating for students	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.78)**
5. Facilitating groups	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.44)**
6. Ability to use intervention strategies that are sensitive to cultural and contextual factors of the student	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.62)**
7. Managing classrooms	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.20)**
8. Managing the school bureaucracy	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.77)**
9. Working with students at-risk	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.72)**
10. Understanding and using assessment data	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.26)**
11. Personal and social counseling	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.74)**
12. Educational and academic counseling	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.58)**
13. Consulting with other school personnel on curriculum development	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.80)**
14. Crisis intervention counseling	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.75)**
15. Helping students with academic course selections	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.01)**

16. Helping to design and implement a variety of appropriate programs for students	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.32)**
17. Monitoring student academic performance	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.10)**
18. Monitoring student personal/social performance	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.42)**
19. Contribute to maintaining an orderly environment	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.00)**
20. Non-counseling duties (do not require specialized training of professional school counselor)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (1.91)**
21. Being able to conceptualize students' concerns from their perspective or worldview	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.46)**
22. Being able to provide culturally sensitive programs	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.40)**
23. Being able to establish relationships with individuals in all cultural groups	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.62)**
24. Ability of the professional school counselor to recognize the Limits of their own multicultural competence and expertise	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.57)**
25. Awareness of how one's own cultural background and experiences have influenced attitudes, values, and biases about the counseling process	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.54)**
26. Racial and cultural self-awareness	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.45)**
27. Knowledge of language other than English	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.26)**
28. Technical skills (e.g. ability to operate computer programs-Word, PowerPoint, etc. and internet-websites, search engines, email, etc.)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.88)**

S E C T I O N T H R E E

Using the scale below, rate the influence of the following factors on the effectiveness of professional school counselors.

1 = Not at all influential
2 = Somewhat influential
3 = Influential
4 = Extremely influential

				M
1. A clear understanding between counselors, administrators, teachers, and staff as to the goals of the school counseling program	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.67)**
2. The principal's support for the school counseling program	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.79)**

3. Socially supportive relationships and effective social networks with colleagues in school	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.32)**
4. Balancing the pressures and expectations of teachers and administrators with the needs of students	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.56)**
5. The decisions, policies, and actions of the school board	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.83)**
6. Participation in the decision-making that affects the school, in general, and the school counseling program, in particular	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.47)**
7. Control of a budget or involvement in a budgeting process	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.63)**
8. The time and place where sessions occur	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.01)**
9. Sufficient physical space to provide individual and small group counseling	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.46)**
10. Appropriate and adequate materials and equipment to deliver intended services	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.35)**
11. The number of counselors hired in a school counseling program	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.62)**
12. Sufficient clerical staff to help counselors perform their duties	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.05)**
13. Physical environment of the school	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.80)**
14. Home environment of the student	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.33)**
15. The level of parental involvement and support for the school counseling program	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.25)**
16. Maintaining student confidentiality	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.84)**
17. Students' perceptions about the school and the school counseling program	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.59)**
18. The provision of educational, consultative, and training experiences to improve one's understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.26)**
19. Time spent on activities not directly related to the school counseling program.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (2.46)**
20. The ratio of counselors to students	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4 (3.58)**

S E C T I O N F O U R

Please indicate whether you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements. For some statements, it may be difficult to respond with simply AGREE or DISAGREE. With those statements, please circle AGREE, if you *mostly agree*, and DISAGREE, if you *mostly disagree*, with the statement. For the statements in SECTION FOUR, please use the margins and/or the next page (pg. 8 front and back, if necessary) to express in writing any difficulties you may have had in selecting your response.

	AGREE (%)	DISAGREE(%)
17. School personnel expectations of students should be influenced by the student's personal circumstances	59.3	38.3
18. All children can learn	93.8	6.2
19. Social or institutional barriers can keep students from achieving their potential (e.g. racial/ ethnic/economic background)	82.7	17.3
20. The educational system responds to the academic needs of all children adequately and appropriately	21.0	75.3
21. All students should consider college as an option	21.0	79.0
22. Students use disabilities as reason not to be successful academically	30.9	69.1
23. The most influential factor in student achievement is home environment	67.9	29.6
24. Cultural differences are real and cannot be ignored	97.5	2.5
25. All students should be held to high academic standards	76.5	23.5
26. School counselors are critical to the educational experiences and outcomes of students	93.8	4.9
27. Schools should be responsible for providing a safe and nurturing environment for every student	98.8	1.2
28. Students should ultimately be accountable for their learning	87.7	8.6
29. All students should have access to college prep classes	81.5	18.5
30. Without parental support, schools cannot be held accountable for student success	53.1	45.7

31. All students should be treated fairly regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status	100	
32. Students use minority status as reason not to be successful academically	18.5	81.5

COMMENTS RELATED TO SECTION FOUR

APPENDIX D

SOURCES OF SURVEY ITEMS GRID

KNOWLEDGE AREAS	MCC	CACREP	ASCA	TSCI	SRG
1 Program planning and evaluation		X	X	X	
2 School Counseling Curriculum development		X	X		
3 Administration of School Counseling Program		X	X		
4 Classroom management		x			
5 Academic development		X	X	x	
6 Career development		X	X	x	
7 Personal and social development		X	X	x	
8 Assessment strategies used to gather...		X	X	X	
9 Learning theories		X		X	
10 Developmental theories		X		X	
11 Standardized test taking skills		x		x	X
12 Substance abuse		X			X
13 Individual counseling theories		X		x	
14 Group counseling theories		X		x	
15 Crisis Intervention		X			
16 Consultation		X		X	
17 Safety enhancement/Violence prevention		X			
18 Post-secondary planning		X	X	X	
19 Student advocacy		X	X	X	
20 Professional identity for school counselors		X	x	X	
21 Educational leadership		X		X	
22 Legal and ethical responsibilities		X			
23 Students' worldviews, beliefs, cultural…	X	X		X	
24 Knowledge and understanding about how oppression…	X	X		X	
25 Student support services		X	X		
26 Special education evaluation and placement		X			
27 Educational foundations		X		X	
28 Technical knowledge		X		X	

SKILLS	MCC	CACREP	ASCA	TSCI	SRG
1 Using leadership skills…		X		X	
2 Collaborating with parents and community members		X		X	
3 Collaborating with other professionals		X		X	
4 Advocating for students		X	X	X	
5 Facilitating groups		X		X	
6 Ability to use intervention strategies…		X		X	
7 Managing classrooms		x			
8 Managing the school bureaucracy		x		x	
9 Working with students at-risk		X	x	X	
10 Understanding and using assessment data		X	x	X	
11 Personal and social counseling		X	X	X	
12 Educational and academic counseling		X	X	X	
13 Consulting with other school personnel…		X		X	
14 Crisis intervention counseling		X			
15 Helping students with academic course selections		X	X	x	
16 Helping to design and implement…		X	X	X	
17 Monitoring student academic performance		X	X	X	
18 Monitoring student personal/social performance		X	X	X	
19 Contribute to maintaining an orderly environment		x			
20 Non-counseling duties					X
21 Being able to conceptualize students' concerns…	X	X		X	
22 Being able to provide culturally sensitive programs	X	X		X	
23 Being able to establish relationships…	X	X		X	
24 Ability of the professional school counselor to…	X	X		X	
25 Awareness of how one's own cultural background…	X	X		X	
26 Racial and cultural self-awareness	X	X		X	
27 Knowledge of language other than English					X
28 Technical skills		X		X	

SYSTEMIC FACTORS	MCC	CACREP	ASCA	TSCI	SRG
1 A clear understanding between counselors…		X	X	X	X
2 The principal's support for the school counseling program		x			X
3 Socially supportive relationships…		X		X	X
4 Balancing the pressures and expectations of teachers…		x			X
5 The decisions, policies, and actions of the school board		X		X	X
6 Participation in the decision-making that affects…		X		X	X
7 Control of a budget…		x			X
8 The time and place where sessions occur		x			X
9 Sufficient physical space to provide individual…		x			X
10 Appropriate and adequate materials…		x			X
11 The number of counselors hired…		x			X
12 Sufficient clerical staff to help counselors…		x			X
13 Physical environment of the school		X		X	X
14 Home environment of the student					X
15 The level of parental involvement…		X		X	X
16 Maintaining student confidentiality		X			X
17 Students' perceptions about the school…		X		X	X
18 The provision of educational, consultative…	X	X		X	X
19 Time spent on activities not directly related…					X
20 The ratio of counselors to students		x			X

COUNSELOR BELIEFS	MCC	CACREP	ASCA	TSCI	SRG
1 School personnel expectations of students…					X
2 All children can learn		X	X	X	X
3 Social or institutional barriers…		X	X	X	X
4 The educational system responds to…		X	X	X	X
5 All students should consider college as an option		x	x	X	X
6 Students use disabilities as reason not to be…					X
7 The most influential factor in student achievement…					X
8 Cultural differences are real and cannot be ignored	X	X		x	X
9 All students should be held to high academic standards		X	X	X	X
10 School counselors are critical to the educational…		X	X	X	X
11 Schools should be responsible for		X	x	X	X
12 Students should ultimately be accountable…					X
13 All students should have access to college prep classes		X	x	X	X
14 Without parental support, schools cannot be…					X
15 All students should be treated fairly regardless of…		X	X	X	X
16 Students use minority status as reason not…					X